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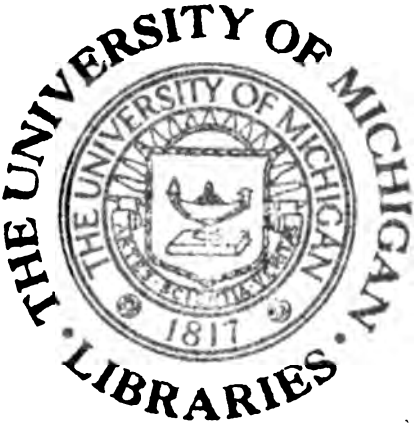
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VENETIAN SERMONS

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THE MOLO OF VENICE

Frontispiece

Venetian Discourses

Drawn from the History, Art & Customs of Venice

By Alexander Robertson, D.D.,
Cavaliere of the Order of St. Maurice and St. Lazarus, Italy
Author of "The Bible of St. Mark," *&c.*

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TO MY WIFE

PREFACE

VENICE was the most stable, the most peaceful, the most prosperous, and the longest-lived Republic the world has ever seen.

> "Through many an age in the mid-sea she dwelt,
> From her retreat calmly contemplating
> The changes of the Earth, herself unchanged.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> A scene of light and glory, a dominion
> That has endured the longest among men."

Such being the case, nothing, I think, could be more opposed to reason and to probability than the notion, too commonly entertained, that she owed her superlative greatness to a policy and to practices that savoured of piracy and pillage, of tyranny and injustice, of cruelty and oppression. And, from my own study of Venice and Venetian history, I am prepared to say that no notion could be more opposed to truth and to fact. The more I know of the old Venetians, the more I feel called upon to admire not only their marvellous energy and industry, their perseverance,

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intelligence, and wisdom, but also their justice and humanity, their healthy morality, and their manly piety.

On the gable of the Church of San Giacomo, at the Rialto, the old commercial centre of the city, Venice carved, for the guidance of her merchants, who trafficked around it, the following inscription—as legible to-day as when cut a thousand years ago, and which Mr. Ruskin says it was the pride of his life to discover :—

"Around this temple, let the merchants' law be just;
Let not their weights be false, nor their covenants unfaithful."

And at St. Mark's, the old judicial centre of the city, above the door that connects Church and Palace—the Doge's chapel and the Doge's home—Venice carved also in that far-back time, for the guidance of her Prince, these significant words :—

"Love justice, render to all their rights;
Let the poor, the widow, the ward, and the orphan, O Doge!
Hope in thee as their protector. Be gentle to all.
Let not fear, nor hate, nor love, nor gold bias thee.
Thou art Doge; but as a flower thou wilt perish and become dust;
And as thy deeds have been, so, after death, thy fate will be."

Moreover, in the speeches of the Doges, in the mosaics of her churches, in the pictures of her palaces, as well as in the books she printed and in the education she gave her sons, we have evidence of how genuine was her love, and how widespread was her knowledge, of the Holy Scriptures.

In this Biblical knowledge possessed by the Venetians, and in the spirit of righteousness which animated them, as shown by the inscriptions I have given above, we have, I think, a key to the explanation of the prosperity and longevity of the Republic. It was because her rulers and her people practised in daily life a lofty morality, the outcome of a vital religious faith, that she

"Rose, like an exhalation from the deep,"

and gained, and maintained, her proud preeminence amongst the nations.

Venice, therefore, cannot but be full of lessons for the preacher and for the hearer. It lends itself, as perhaps no other European city does, to Biblical illustration. During the years I have lived and worked in it, I have found this to be the case; and I have been accustomed, from time to time, thus to use it in my pulpit ministrations. In doing

so I know that travellers always appreciated my efforts, and that they found it much more profitable to think of Venice as fitted to afford them wholesome and Christian teaching, and to stimulate them to live nobly, than as being only, what at the close of her career she did become,

> "The pleasant place of all festivity,
> The revel of the earth, the masque of Italy."

My hope is, through the publication of these sermons, to reach and influence a wider circle than I can in my Venetian "upper room," and to lead my readers to regard and study Venice from this same standpoint, in order that they may derive a similar benefit; for I believe that Venice appeals to the mind and to the heart, not only of those who visit her shores, but of all who take an intelligent interest in human affairs. Venice is dear to all lands, and

> "Most of all,
> Albion! to thee; the Ocean Queen should not
> Abandon Ocean's children."

ALEXANDER ROBERTSON.

VENICE, *November* 1905.

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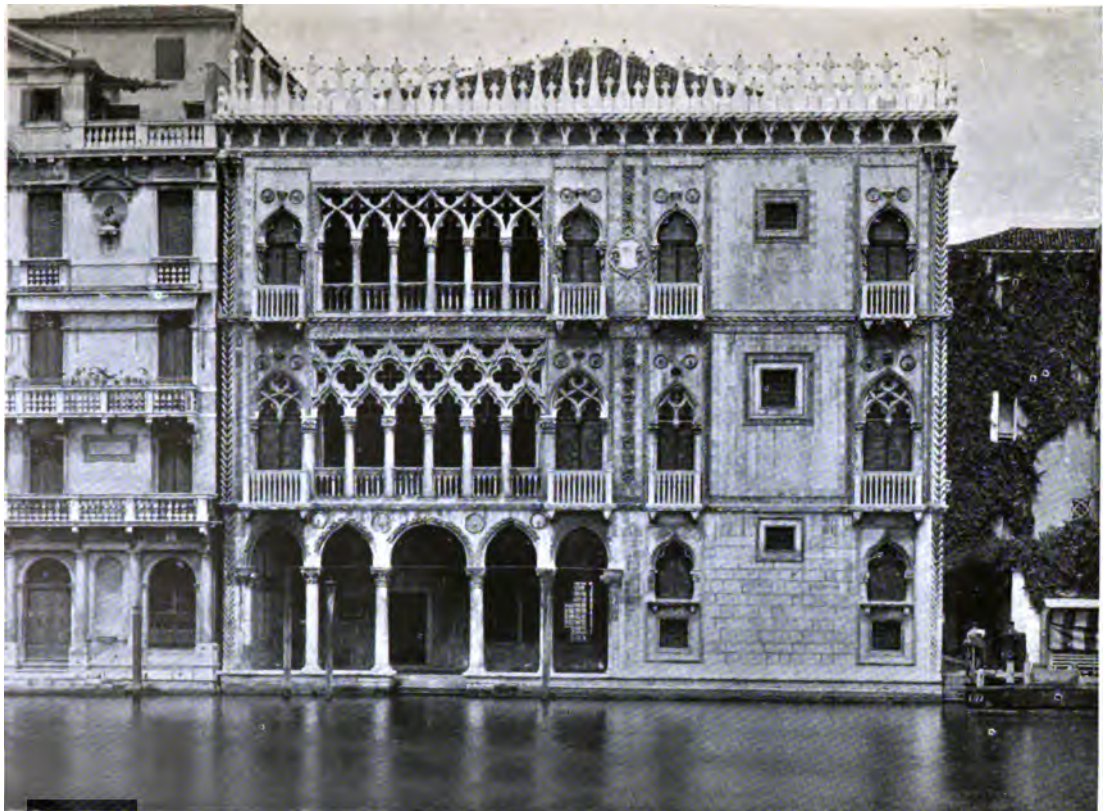
I

THE PALACE

"That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth: that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace."

—PSALM cxliv. 12.



Alinari Photo

A VENETIAN PALACE
(CA' D'ORO)

To face page 2

I

THE PALACE

"*Polished after the similitude of a palace.*"

—PSALM cxliv. 12.

VENICE is a city of palaces. Wherever one goes, whether on foot amongst the intricacies of its narrow winding *calles*, or in gondola amongst its scarcely less tortuous canals, one never fails to see noble piles of building. They might be royal residences: they are the palatial homes of the people. It is true that they show the marks of age, of defacement and decay. Time and tide and tempest, neglect and vandalism, have set their seal upon them, yet they all bear evidences of stability and security, of richness and refinement, of grace and dignity and beauty. Their constructive and artistic merit is marvellous. They exhibit "good architecture, which has life and truth and joy in it." Their variety, too, is striking and interesting. They represent different

schools of architecture — Byzantine, Gothic, Lombardic, Renaissance. Nor are those of any one school copies of each other. They are alike, and yet different, as are the leaves of a tree, or the "salt sea wavelets that break on their foundations."

In my text a palace is spoken of as an object the excellences of which should figuratively find their counterpart in a well-constructed character and life. We are called upon to have characters and lives "polished after the similitude of a palace." The figure is a happy one, fitted to afford us instruction and benefit, and in following it out we need not transfer ourselves in thought to Palestine, but simply take, for purposes of analogy, those palaces we see around us in Venice, which are, indeed, like much else in this city, not a little Eastern in character. In studying them we shall see how each part, from basement to cornice, and even the very soil in which they are planted, has its lesson for us. Beginning with this last, I shall go steadily upward in the building.

(1) *The soil on which these palaces stand.* —The strangeness of the position of these palaces—rising out of the water, their bases washed by every flowing tide—leads the mind

at once to think of the nature of the soil on which they stand. Surely of all soils it must be the most unsuitable to sustain the weight of very massive buildings? And this it is; for what is the soil of Venice? It is, for the most part, but shifting mud and sand. There is no rock, there is hardly any clay, or substratum of compactness and solidity. All is loose and soft and incoherent. One cannot dig a foot or two beneath the surface without coming to water. The whole soil consists of beds of sediment brought down from the Dolomite Alps, to the north, and deposited here by the great rivers, the Piave, the Brenta, the Adige, and the Po, which in ages gone by passed through these lagoons to the sea. To realise what Venice stands on, one has but to climb any church tower in the city, or in the neighbouring islands, and look at the land visible above the ebbing tide around. It will be seen to consist of clusters of low-lying islands, of long stretches of level sand, and of fields of brown and green seaweed, that lose themselves in the distance towards the mainland and the sea. The fishermen, frequenting these shoals and shallows in search of shell-fish and bait, will be seen to sink in the plashy surface. "Or," as Mr. Ruskin says, "let the traveller

follow in his boat at evening the windings of some unfrequented channel far into the midst of the melancholy plain, . . . and so wait until the bright investiture and sweet warmth of the sunset are withdrawn from the waters, and the black desert of their shore lies in its nakedness beneath the night, pathless, comfortless, infirm, lost in dark languor, and fearful silence, except where the salt rivulets plash into the tideless pools, or the seabirds flit from their margins with a questionable cry; and he will be enabled to enter in some sort into the horror of heart with which this solitude was anciently chosen by man for his habitation." No place less tempting, no soil less adapted for the erection of palaces, could be found.

Since, then, we are called upon to have characters and lives polished after the similitude of a palace, it is natural first to think of the nature of the soil of the heart on which they are to be raised. This, like the soil of Venice, is most unsuitable. There is no stability, no steadiness of purpose towards that which is noble and good inherent in it. On the contrary, there is an indwelling tendency and bias towards that which is evil. This is proclaimed in the pages of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. "Every imagination

THE NATURAL SOIL OF VENICE

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of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually." "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live." "It is witnessed to," as Canon Liddon has said, "by the actual facts of human nature, for in practice men themselves treat their own human nature not as a thing of ideal excellence, but as some restless and disturbing force, against which man himself, even in his own interests as a member of his own society, must necessarily take precautions of law and of police." Seneca has said, "We are all wicked; what one blames in another, each will find in his own bosom." And Huxley has left these words: "The doctrines of original sin, and of the innate depravity of man, . . . appear to me to be vastly nearer the truth than the liberal popular delusion that babies are all born good." Not only so, but when one resolves in his own strength to be noble of heart and to live nobly, and even summonses to the struggle all the energies of his being, he does not succeed. As St. Paul has said with reference to his natural state of heart, "The good that I would I do not; the evil that I would not, that I do." And Luther said, before his conversion, "In vain do I make promises to God, sin is ever the stronger of the

two." The old Adam was more than a match for the young Melancthon. The natural heart, like the Slough of Despond in John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, swallows up whole cartloads of good intentions.

But the instability, the unadaptability of the soil of Venice for the raising on it of palaces has been overcome; for there they stand, and have stood for centuries, exciting the admiration of travellers from every land. And even so the inherent and acquired moral deterioration and depravity of the human heart can be overcome, and the soil of the heart, like that of Venice, be so changed, that characters and lives can be raised upon it "polished after the similitude of a palace."

(2) *How the necessary change in the soil was effected.*—To overcome the natural instability of the soil for building upon, and to fit it to bear the weight of palaces, the old Venetians went northward, to the forests of the Dolomite mountains, and westward, across the Adriatic, to those of Dalmatia, and cut down trees of oak and beech and larch—trees whose wood is hard and enduring. Of these they formed piles, beams from twelve to eighteen feet long, and from ten to twelve inches square, and sharpened at one end—sound and solid shafts. These

they drove deep down out of sight into the mud and sand, where the main or master walls of their buildings were to rise. Many piles were used for each palace, for, though they did not touch each other, they were yet driven close together. Thus, in preparing the soil, in changing the soil, for the building of the Rialto Bridge, twelve thousand piles of oak were driven home, and in doing the same for the Church of the Madonna della Salute over a million and a half were used. And as each pile was driven separately, it was a work of patient, steady toil; and yet it was carried on cheerfully, for the workmen sang their national ballads to the stroke of the hammer—a custom that has come down to the present time. By this process, in the course of centuries, the whole soil of Venice has been changed, and rendered stable for the support of its palaces.

And thus, too, it can be with our poor human nature. It can also be changed, and changed in like manner. What we have to do is to go to the Bible, as the old Venetians went to the forests of Cadore and Dalmatia, and there we shall find statements of God's love to us, and promises of what God is prepared in His love to do for us, scattered throughout its pages as thickly as trees on the slopes of these highland

regions. These statements and promises are to us what those shafts of wood, what those piles were to the Venetians, and we must use them as such. We must take the hammer of faith and drive them deep down into our hearts. We must really accept them, believe them, and make them our own. And if we do this, if we make them part of ourselves, of our being, then the soil of our hearts, like that of Venice, will be changed, and we shall obtain a solid substratum on which to build characters and lives "polished after the similitude of a palace." For it is morally impossible to believe that God loves us, and so loves us as to have given His Son to die for us, and to believe in the incarnation and in the atoning death of God's Son, and to believe the many promises of blessing that are given us in Him, and remain uninfluenced, unchanged in character and life. No, believing in God's love as revealed in Christ, we must love Him in return; and, loving Him, we must seek to please Him, and the Spirit of Jesus will be given us, according to His own promise, to enable us so to do. The old love for sin will be displaced, the old subjection to sin will be broken, the heart will be changed, renewed, regenerated, a new heart will be given us, and a right spirit will be put within us.

And this reception, this belief, implies labour. It is something very different from a general acceptance of what is written in the Bible as true, something very different from an hereditary faith in Christianity, something very different from belief in specific doctrine on the strength of an external authority. It is belief, realisation, acceptance of what is revealed, founded on personal knowledge, personal thought, personal experience. "Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

I have often been asked if the piles of Venice palaces never rot, and so give way and require to be renewed. My answer is, unless something very abnormal happens, never. Piles driven into the soil seven or eight hundred years ago still support in perfect solidity and security the old palaces built upon them; and in many cases, during these past centuries, palaces have been rebuilt without their original piles requiring to be renewed. So far, indeed, from decaying, the wood, hidden away from light and air and change of temperature, becomes really harder and harder, stronger and stronger. I have some sections of the oaken piles of the

old Campanile of St. Mark, that fell in 1902, which were driven in over a thousand years ago, and they are as sound and solid as the timber of any growing tree. Recently in England, some of the piles of old London Bridge, and pieces of wood belonging to Roman times, were found in a perfectly sound condition, hard, indeed, as ebony.

In like manner the statements and promises of God's word never fail the believer. Man's word may be as "a bruised reed, on which, if a man lean, it will go into his hand and pierce it," but not the word of God. All His promises are Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus. Christ in the heart is evermore realised by the Christian to be the Rock of Ages.

(3) *The palace foundations.*—Having secured solidity of soil, the next step taken by the Venetians was to lay down on the top of these piles the foundations of their palaces. As these foundations would have hard work to do —as they would have to resist the stress and strain of the constant ebb and flow of the tide, of the beating of the waves in days of storm and tempest, of exposure to the weather, of the ravages of time, as well as do their appointed work of holding up and holding together, in perfect security, a massive pile of building—

they had to be of stone. But there is no stone in Venice. So once more the Venetians had to go to the mainland, and across the Adriatic to the great quarries of Istria to find it, and to bring it here in their sailing and rowing boats, at the cost of much risk and labour. And the stones they brought, as we can see to-day, have answered well their purpose. They are large, sound, solid, honest blocks of stone. There is nothing weak, nothing unreal, about them. Sometimes we see the foundation courses of buildings covered with plaster, upon which dividing lines are scored, so as to make the stones appear larger than they are. There is nothing of that in Venice foundations. One can see at a glance what each block really is, and could count how many there are with little difficulty. Nor have they any carving upon them. There is no decoration, no elaborate workmanship, nothing of what is called in architecture "rustication." That would have been out of keeping with the work they had to do, and would have taken away in appearance from their solidity. Each stone is simply chiselled smooth and square, so as to lie close against its neighbour, and thus leave no interstice by which water could enter to sap the building. It is only in the New Jerusalem, where there is

no enemy and where there are no storms and tempests, that "the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones." The blocks thus prepared were laid down, evenly and levelly, in regular courses above the piles. The first courses are buried out of sight in mud and mire; the next succeeding ones are lost in the water below the fall of the lowest ebb tide; the next are sometimes in the water and sometimes out of it; the topmost of all rise clear into the air and sunshine beyond the reach of the highest spring tide. "Levelness, evenness, strength, stern endurance," are their chief characteristics. They almost answer to Mr. Ruskin's description of the foundations of nature: "Smooth sheets of rock, glistering like sea waves, and that ring under the hammer like a brazen bell."

For the building of characters and lives "polished after the similitude of a palace," we, too, need foundation stones; and these must be large enough, broad enough, strong enough, to resist the assaults of the world, the devil, and the flesh; and to hold up and hold together, in harmony and solidity and compactness, the fabric of our lives. And for the procuring of these we must again go to the Bible, and there

FOUNDATION COURSES OF PALAZZO GRIMANI

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we shall find them. And what are they? They are the great principles laid down for the regulation of our conduct in thought and word and action, the principles given in it to guide us in our relation to self, the world, and God; the principles, for example, laid down in our Lord's discourses, and, above all, manifested in His life. The Sermon on the Mount alone is a quarry of them. In it we have given us principles to guide us in our estimate of wherein true blessedness consists—to guide us in the exercise of self-restraint, of heart-purity, of truthfulness of speech, of forgiveness, of alms-giving, of prayer, of fasting, of laying up of treasure, of singleness of aim, of freedom from anxiety, of judging of others, we have there the principle embodied in the golden rule, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." It was at the close of this discourse that our Saviour said, "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock." And then in our Lord's life we have

all these principles set in a visible form before our eyes. He has left us an example that we should follow His steps.

Like the foundation stones of these Venetian palaces, these principles for the regulation of our conduct are sound, solid, large, easily seen, easily understood, and easily applied. They are very different from the petty laws, regulations, and ordinances of a ceremonial age, which St. Paul called "weak and beggarly elements"—very different from those in later ages which gave rise to "cases of conscience" which it required spiritual advisers to adjudicate upon. Indeed, Christianity does not offer us any system of morality, any code of laws at all, but principles of conduct. And thus, whilst there are mysteries in the Christian faith which the subtilest intellect may not fully understand, so far as practical Christian living is concerned, the principles laid down in our Lord's teaching, and exemplified in His life, can be seen and be made use of by the commonest understanding. And accepting these principles, and using them, we shall find them unmoving and unmovable, like the basement courses of these palaces, giving to the life which is built upon them a unity and solidity, an evenness and straightforwardness, a consistency and

endurance, such as nothing else can give. "The foundation of the Lord, that will stand."

One other remark I desire to make before going further. These foundations in Venice are very much broader than the walls they support. It is not often that a new palace is erected, but a few years ago one was built—the first for some two hundred years—and, as I watched the foundations being laid, I was surprised at their breadth. They were some twelve feet wide. The walls raised upon them were broad too, but at their basements, where they were widest, they did not cover one half that space. The foundations of these Venice palaces are twice or thrice as broad as the walls they sustain.

And just so, the principles given us for the construction and regulation of our lives are very much broader than anything we can build upon them—than the actions which are their outcome and embodiment. They are broader than all creeds and churches. They are broad enough to enable all to become noble of heart and noble of life, who, though not seeing eye to eye with each other in many things—in intellectual views of doctrine, in opinions as to church ritual and government—yet "love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and in

truth." They are broad enough to enable all who have personal union with Christ, inside the pale of any Church or outside the pale of all Churches, to raise for themselves characters and lives "polished after the similitude of a palace."

(4) *The palace walls.* — Upon these great foundations, laid, as we have seen, upon the piles, the Venetians raised their palace walls. For the materials of their construction they had not to go far. They took what lay to their hand in and near their lagoons. All the walls of all the palaces in Venice, without exception, are built of brick — ordinary clay, kneaded and moulded, and baked in the sun or in the brick-kiln. No material more common, or of less value in itself, could be found —no material, in many respects, more frail and fragile. But yet these walls of brick have stood for centuries, and are standing to-day as securely as when first raised by hands long mouldered into dust. Even earthquakes that have destroyed mainland cities, have never seriously damaged Venice. In the thirteenth century an earthquake, it is said, dried the Grand Canal, yet never a house fell. And why was this? It was because these palaces were raised upon these great foundations. From them they derive

PALACE WALLS OF BRICK
(CAMPO MATER DOMINI)

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their strength and solidity, their unity and compactness, their consistency and endurance.

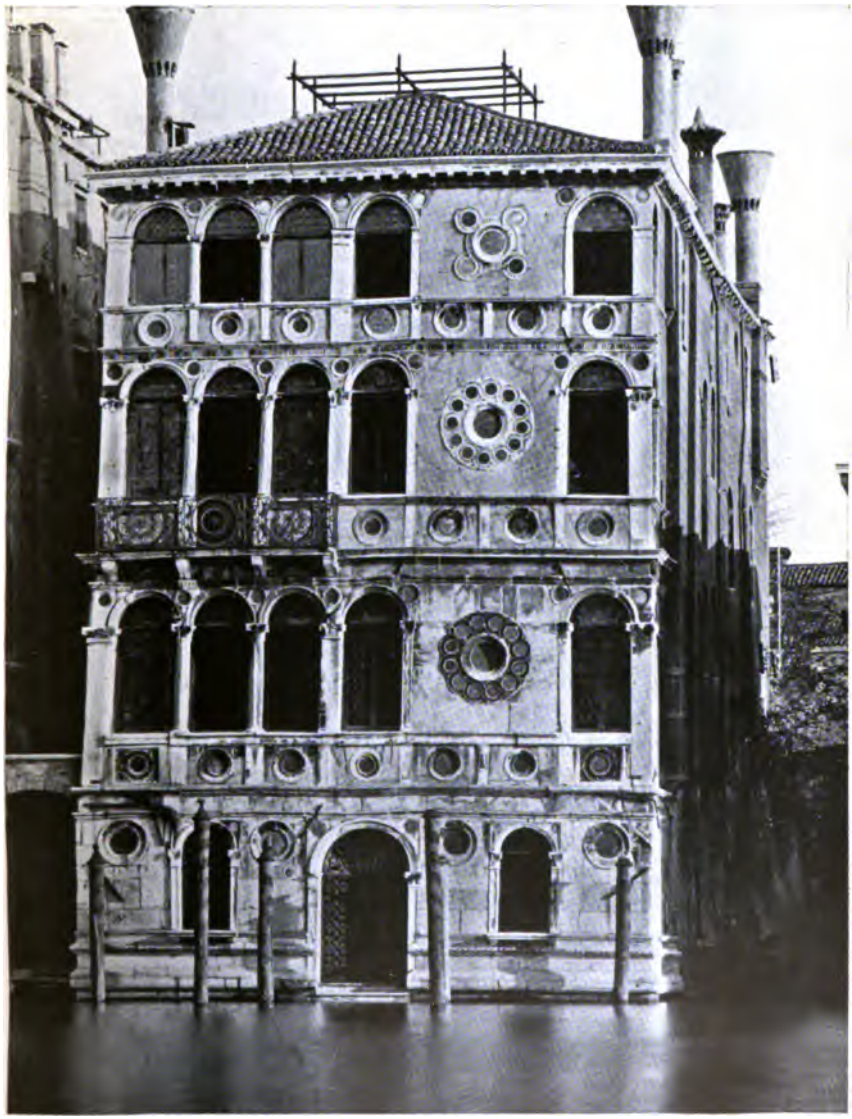
And the lives that most of us lead are composed of very common materials. Not many of us are called upon to fill lofty spheres or to perform high and heroic actions—to be the deliverers, or leaders, or lawgivers, or poets of a nation. Not many of us are called upon to direct and uphold society, to stand upon the heights of history. And fewer still inherit that glory of birth and state that makes them sovereigns and princes. The great majority of us have to fill humble spheres and do humble duties, and to repeat the same humble duties day by day, to live and work in hidden nooks, like flowers blooming in secluded dells. The materials, therefore, of which we have to construct our lives are not inaptly symbolised by the clay-brick materials of these palace walls. They are common duties, of no intrinsic value in themselves. But if our lives are the outcome and embodiment of Christian principles, if these are the foundation stones on which they are built, if we recognise the finger of God's providence in the spheres we are called upon to fill, if we see guiding us in our humble orbits the same hand that guides the planets in their courses, if we do the

duties allotted to us in these spheres, however lowly they may be, because God has called upon us to do them; and if we do them as service rendered to Him and for His glory; if, whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we do all to the glory of God; if, whatsoever we do in word or deed, we do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ—then our lives will receive, like the walls of these palaces, a strength and solidity, a completeness and endurance that nothing can overthrow. Life's angriest billows may lash them in all their fury, but they will fall back broken and powerless like those of ocean lashing a granite cliff. Even old age, and death itself, cannot damage such a character. Dr. John Ker has said: "We have seen the aged Christian, from whose memory the very names and faces of his children were blotted out, looking with an undimmed eye on the face of Christ, weak and wandering in all things else, but clear and consistent on eternal truths, and dwelling on them with the freshness of youthful affection. There is surely something sublime in a man standing with his feet firm on the unseen rock of eternity, when the waves are reaching unto his soul, whole and unbroken in his noblest nature, and in the shipwreck of all the powers

that bind him to time. If men would think, it is proof of the divinity of the Gospel and of the almighty hand of God, that can put something into the heart which cannot be shaken when all things else give way." Yes, believing in Christ and living in Christ, possessing a changed heart through faith in Christ, and shaping our lives by inflexible Christian principle, we shall be enabled to construct out of the commonest materials of common day duties—of which God Himself hath need, or He would not have made us, and assigned them to us as our task—imperishable, indestructible characters and lives "polished after the similitude of a palace."

(5) *The palace ornamentation.*—But though the walls of these Venetian palaces are of brick, they are not lacking in beauty. Sometimes the bricks themselves are so moulded and arranged, so polished and cut, as to become objects of beauty. And then there is a beauty inherent in the building itself; for, as Mr. Ruskin has said, sometimes "the best thoughts of their architects are expressed in brick." But besides these things many elements of beauty have been put into these buildings. Some of them, like the Ducal Palace and the Ca' d'Oro, are cased

in marble. The doors and windows of all Byzantine palaces are encrusted with the same material. Gothic palaces are decorated with marble columns and pilasters, and their windows are often framed in delicately wrought dog-tooth and dentil ornament. Balconies, with balustrades of slender marble shafts, with carved capitals, supported on various richly ornamented brackets, run gracefully from window to window. The cross, the symbol of the Christian faith, was set conspicuously in the centre of the façade of every palace, and often repeated above or between the windows; in other parts were inserted disks of precious marbles—porphyry, serpentine, and verd-antique—masses of indestructible, unfading loveliness of colour—purple, green, red, yellow; whilst, above all, string-courses of vine leaves often festooned the building. The larger spaces of brick wall were ornamented with colour in chequered patterns and diaper-work, or were covered with frescoes by such great artists as Giorgione, Titian, and Tintoretto. Sharp angles were softened away by fluted shafts and cable columns, springing with "rooted and ascendant strength like that of foliage," from base to cornice, whilst upon the cornice itself, the crest and crown of the building, special decoration



MARBLE DISK ORNAMENTATION
(PALAZZO DARIO)

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was always bestowed. As Mr. Ruskin has said, the Venetian "was content, perforce, to gather the clay of the Brenta banks, and bake it into brick for the substance of his wall, but he overlaid it with the wealth of ocean, with the most precious foreign marbles. You might fancy early Venice one wilderness of brick, which a petrifying sea had beaten upon till it coated it with marble; at first a dark city—washed white by the sea foam."

In like manner, no matter how humble our spheres of duty and how commonplace our daily duties, into each life there may enter elements of beauty. In the first place, there is always an inherent dignity and beauty in every Christian character in whomsoever found, and in every Christian life by whomsoever led, just as there is in the general expression of the architecture of a Venetian palace, though its walls be but of brick; and in many cases, as in the architectural expression of some of these palaces, this rises into true nobility and majesty. But besides that, God permits us, and desires us, to insert into our characters, to hang upon the walls of our lives, moral excellences, which, like the disks of precious marbles and the carved ornaments of the palaces, and like

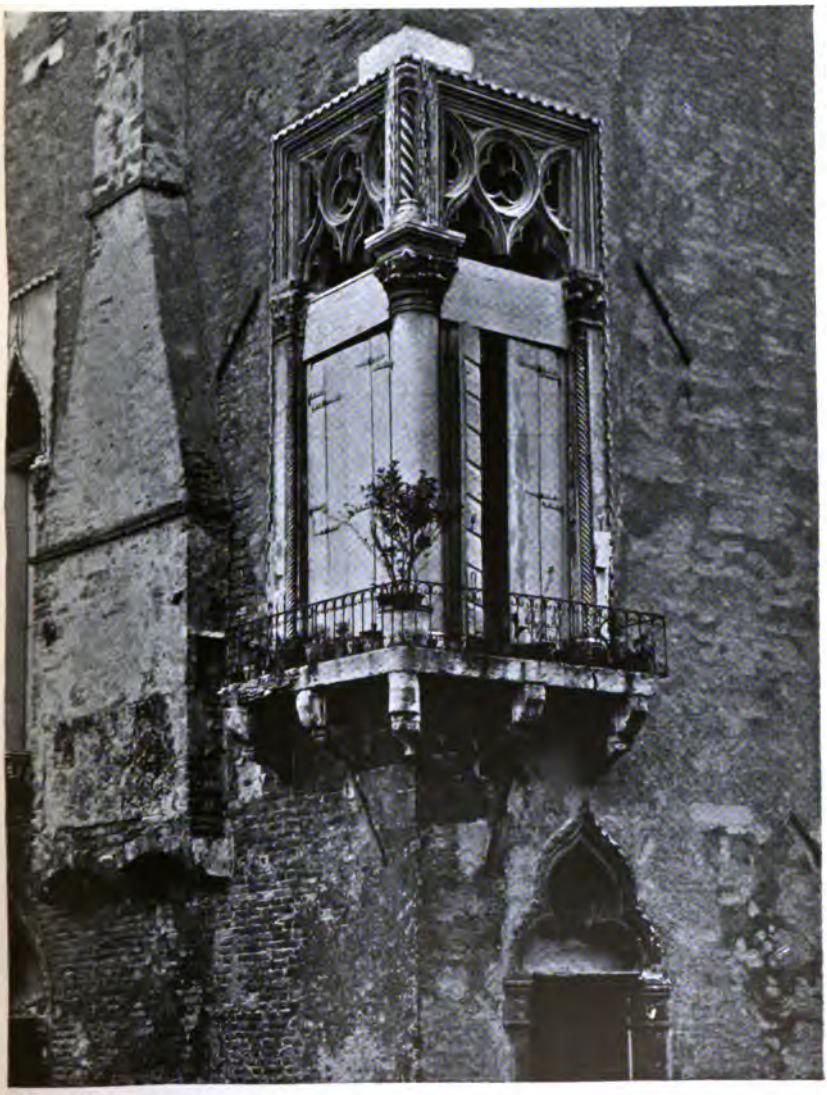
Aaron's holy garments, shall be "for glory and for beauty." To all of us, to the feeblest and the humblest, invitations are given for the rendering of special services to the Master, for the carrying out of some special portions of the Divine counsel. Opportunities are constantly being afforded us to show kindnesses to the poor, the sick, the sorrowing; to perform acts of self-sacrifice for the material and spiritual good of others; to deny ourselves for Jesus' sake; whilst not unfrequently occasions are given to us for the doing of heroic actions, risking, it may be, health and life in an endeavour to save the health and life of a fellow-creature. And, just as in these Venetian palaces the decoration increases as the building ascends, and is, as we have seen, most conspicuous in the cornice, which Mr. Ruskin calls, "the close of the wall's life," so it is with our palace characters and lives; for as they advance towards completion, as a well-spent life draws to its close, God generally grants an increase of leisure, of ability, and of means, for the performance of actions of moral excellence and beauty.

And this moral beauty is the highest kind of beauty. It is more lovely, more precious, more enduring than that of the pictures of

the old masters that travellers come to Italy to admire; more lovely, more precious, more enduring than the beauty of the landscape, than that of the noblest conception of the thinker, than that of the loftiest flight of poetic genius, for it is the beauty of holiness, an attribute of God Himself, and that assimilates us in being to Him. As Dr. Arnold, writing from Rieti, in Italy, says: "If I feel thrilling through me the sense of this outward beauty—innocent, indeed, yet necessarily unconscious—what is the sense one ought to have of moral beauty—of God the Holy Spirit's creation—of humbleness and truth, and self-devotion and love! Much more beautiful, because made truly after God's image, are the forms and colours of kind and wise and holy thoughts, and words and actions; . . . there is in the moral beauty an inherent excellence which the natural beauty cannot have; for the moral beauty is actually, so to speak, God, and not merely His work; His living and conscious ministers and servants are—it is permitted us to say so—the temples of which the light is God Himself." And this moral excellence and beauty it is given to all to put into their lives. All of us—the humblest, the poorest, the obscurest — may

have characters and lives "polished after the similitude of a palace."

(6) *The palace use.*—Lastly, these Venetian palaces were owned and tenanted by men worthy of them. There was a perfect correspondence between the palace and its occupant. The one was worthy of the other. The more I study early Venetian history, the more my admiration for those who built this city increases. Who were the early settlers? They were poor fugitives flying before Attila and his Huns, the "scourge of God," as he was called, who burned their mainland cities of Aquileia, of Gradium, of Altinum, and of Padua. They came to these lagoons and watery marshes to save their lives, "seeking," as Mr. Ruskin says, "like Israel of old, a refuge from the sword in the paths of the sea." They had many and what well might have seemed insurmountable difficulties to contend with. They had to fight the sea and the elements for a foothold. They were cut off from all human sympathy and help, and their means of livelihood must have been for long scanty and precarious. The city was built slowly, gradually, as Mr. Ruskin says, "by iron hands and patient hearts contending against the adversity of nature and the fury of man."



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ELEMENTS OF BEAUTY IN COMMON-PLACE LIFE

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But the very struggle they had to engage in made them great. It developed intelligence, earnestness, resolution, perseverance, endurance, hope and faith. It contributed to the formation of a robust, manly, Christian character. Hence an old chronicler says, "*La quale citade è stada hedificata da veri e boni Christiani*" (which city was built by true and good Christians). From being fugitives they became conquerors, conquering nature around them, and in their own hearts. From being exiles huddled together, uncomfortably and insecurely in reed-thatched, rush-floored huts, they became princes, lodged regally in palaces.

And even so it is not for nothing that we are called upon to raise for ourselves characters and lives "polished after the similitude of a palace." It is that we may be becomingly occupied and tenanted. It is that each believer may be a palace prepared for the Master's use. It is that God may be known in our palaces for a refuge, that He may build His sanctuary within us like high palaces. It is that we may be "builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." It is that Christ may come into us, and take up His abode with us, that we may be temple-palaces of the Holy Ghost. It is that God

may dwell in us and walk in us, that He may be our God, and we His people.

It is easy—it is natural, perhaps—to live otherwise—to build for ourselves houses, without piles, without foundations, that have no stability, no security, no beauty—buildings that are, to quote Mr. Ruskin's language suggested by the fall of some houses in Victoria Street, Westminster, only too liable to be "washed away by the first wave of a summer flood," having "fungous wall of nocent rottenness, that a thunder-shower soaks down with its workmen into a heap of slime and death." It is easy, it is natural, perhaps, to be content with a character and life, morally and intellectually fair to look upon, but which is unstable and empty because not founded on Christ and Christ's words; for, as Dr. Arnold has said, "the spiritual house is empty so long as the pearl of great price is not there, although it may be hung with all the decorations of earthly knowledge." It is possible to hear Christ's words and to do them not, and so to be like "a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."

"We are persuaded better things of you, and

things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak." Even for those who have been building without foundations on the shifting sand there is hope. As Dr. Ker has said: "Though you may have lost what you once reckoned the good of life, there is another and higher good still open to you, not merely hereafter but here. God can teach you how to build on the ruins of former hopes—nay, He can show you how you can take the very stones of them that have fallen, and lie scattered around, and may joint them into a new and more beautiful and enduring structure." "The city shall be builded upon its own heap, and the palace remain after the manner thereof." May God give all of us grace to hear, to believe, to obey; to begin to build, to continue building, and to finish—God saying to each one of us, what he said to Zerubbabel, "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it;" when "he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it." And may God say to each one of us, "Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces." May all of us have characters and lives "POLISHED AFTER THE SIMILITUDE OF A PALACE."

II

THE DOOR

"Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it."—Rev. iii. 8.

CHRIST THE DOOR

(By kind permission of Comm. F. Ongania, Venice)

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II

THE DOOR

"I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." —John x. 9.

In the early centuries of the Christian era, when there were no printed books, and when manuscripts were the property of the few, it was customary to make the walls, and even the floors of churches teach the people Bible knowledge, by covering them with pictures illustrative of the main facts of the Christian faith, and bearing the sacred text they were intended to expound and enforce. For the selection of these texts and illustrations, and for their arrangement in more or less conspicuous places, according to their relative importance, as well as for the teaching of this art of Christian Iconography in general, a school existed on Mount Athos, the Holy Hill of Greece. Quite recently a copy of its rules was discovered in one of the many

hundreds of monasteries scattered over that mountain. An examination of these rules showed that this text, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture," with its appropriate illustration, was ordered to be put up over the main portal of the church, on the outside, so that all entering in might see and read it. The selection of such a text, for such a position, was a happy one. Indeed, no passage of Scripture, fuller of Gospel truth, or more appropriate to be set over a church door, could be found, for it reminded all, as they crossed the threshold of the material church, that the true Church of God could only be entered by Jesus Christ, "the door of the sheep," and that by Him all were invited to enter; and that so doing all would find the very blessings they required—salvation and sustenance, protection and provision; they would be folded and fed as the sheep are under the Shepherd's care, they should "be saved and find pasture."

I believe that only in two churches in Europe is this text, with its suitable illustration, to be seen now; one of these is St. Sophia's, Constantinople, and the other is St. Mark's, Venice —two churches that in architecture and in their

original mosaic decorations very much resemble each other. In accordance with the Byzantine Iconographic Code this text in the church of St. Sophia is placed above the main outer door, only, as St. Sophia's is now a Moslem mosque, it is barely legible through a coat of whitewash. In St. Mark's Church it remains in all its original dignity of design and colour, only it is not outside, but inside the building. St. Mark's Church has two lines of doors, the first opening into the atrium and the second into the church. Entering by the great central portal of the outer line, crossing the atrium, where the catechumens were instructed, a flight of marble steps leads up to the great central bronze door of the church. Passing through this into the building itself, we shall see above it, on its inner side, this text with a most appropriate and significant Byzantine representation, wrought in glass mosaic, and framed in marble. In the centre of the picture is the Lord Jesus Christ, sitting enthroned, robed in royal purple and blue; behind His head there is a golden nimbus with the shadow of the cross upon it, and His monogram, begun on one side and ending on the other, I͂-C X͂-C (Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς—Jesus Christ). At Christ's right hand is Mary, with a simple circlet of

gold behind her head, with her monogram, M̃-P Θ 'Υ (Μητῆρ Θειοῦ 'Υιοῦ—Mother of the Divine Son), and her hands raised in the Byzantine attitude of prayer (the only attitude in which she is ever represented in the original mosaics of the church); and at Christ's left hand is St. Mark, in a similar attitude of worship, with his name, *S̃. Marcus*, and with a similar nimbus. Christ thus adored has His right hand raised in the act of blessing, whilst with His left He holds an open Bible on His knee, the outspread pages of which, turned full towards the spectator, bear in large letters the words: "*Ego sum hostium, per me si quis introierit salvabitur, et pascua inveniet*" (I am the door, and by me if any man enter in he shall be saved . . and find pasture). As there was not space enough on the two open pages for the whole verse, the words "go in and out" are omitted.

Let us now go over my text clause by clause, and may God make our study of it glorifying to His name, through our good.

(1) "*I am the door.*"—Like many other objects to which our Lord, for the more easy comprehension of His hearers, compares Himself, such as the Light, the Vine, the Corn of Wheat, and the Water, the one here used is a very humble one—a Door. It is one

M. Bartoluzzi pinx

"I AM THE DOOR"

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well fitted to remind us of the deep humiliation to which He stooped for our sakes, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery" (a thing to be grasped at) "to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." And the door selected for comparison is the lowliest of its kind—a sheep-fold door. In contrast to the lofty, wide, ample, ornate portals of palaces and mansions, and even of many ordinary dwelling-houses, it is low and confined, narrow and plain. It reminds us of the "strait gate" of another of our Lord's parables. It is the postern, or wicket gate, of John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. It thus the better symbolised Him who was "despised and rejected of men," "who was as a root out of a dry ground, without form and comeliness," of whom it was said, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him."

And yet the figure is most expressive. For the door here figuratively spoken of, however

humble it may be, commands the fold. Nothing can enter the sheep-fold but by the door. And its very lowliness, and narrowness, and straitness add to its serviceableness and importance in that it aids the shepherd in his examination of the sheep, insuring that none can enter unknown and unrecognised by him. And even so no one can enter into the true fold unknown to Christ. No one can deceive Him. On His part there is perfect knowledge of all who are His. "I know my sheep;" "I know them by name." This fact should be a comfort to true Christians, and a warning to those who are only formal ones.

The impressiveness of the figure is still further enhanced when we realise that our Saviour here claims to be not only the door, but the only door. He does not say, "I am a door," but "I am *the* door," for the article in the original is very emphatic, implying that there is no other door. "I (alone) am the door of the sheep, all that ever came before me (usurping my place) are thieves and robbers." The lawyers thought that the "key of knowledge" which they possessed would open for them the door of the kingdom of heaven; the scribes and Pharisees trusted similarly in their legal righteousness and their ceremonial

observances; whilst the common people, as a whole, were content to rest in their Abrahamic descent, saying, "We have Abraham for our father." But our Saviour brushes all these confidences aside as refuges of lies, and claims by the use of this humble figure of the door to stand, solitarily and alone, the Saviour of the world. "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." "There is no other name given under heaven, among men, whereby we must be saved." One door to the ark, one door to the sheep-fold, one Saviour and Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is remarkable how this claim was recognised and confessed by the old Venetians in St. Mark's Church. Not content with the conspicuous display of it in the words and in the pictorial illustration of our text above the door, they have re-asserted it on the marble arch that frames the mosaic in the following lines:—

"*Ego sum janua vitæ*
Per me mia membra venite."

(I am the gate of life, O My members, enter by Me.) Also, on a band of marble that crosses the wall above, there is an inscription referring to the picture of Christ beneath: "*Quis fuerit,*

et quo te, quo procioque redemit, et cur tibi fecit, et dedit omnia, mente revolve" (Who He was, and for what purpose, and at what price, He redeemed thee, and why He did this for thee, and gave thee all things, consider). Further, on the keystones of all the arches of the outer line of doors of the church the figure of Christ is carved. In many churches, both ancient and modern, whilst Christ may be set over one door, probably the principal one of the building, very often Mary is put over a second door, and the saint, after whom the church is named, over a third. This arrangement is intended to teach that though Christ is the Door, the main Door, into the fold of the redeemed, yet men are helped thitherward by the intercession and by the mediation of His mother and of the saints. St. Mark's Church is a protest against that teaching. In it all the doors are one door, and that Door is Christ. With Christ the Church stands or falls. The sculptures and mosaics of St. Mark's thus singularly emphasise the teaching of the text—Christ the Door, the only Door. The spiritual fold of the redeemed, like that material sanctuary, cannot be entered but by Him.

Christ's claim to be the Door, the only Door, is rendered still more impressive by His

CHRIST THE KEYSTONE

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Mail

asserting Himself to be this in His own person. "*I* (personally) am the door." Our Saviour's words may be understood almost literally. A friend of mine in the East was once looking at a sheep-fold in the company of a shepherd. After a time he said, "Well, you have shown me many things about the fold, but you have not shown me the door." The shepherd replied in the very words of the text, "I am the door," and then, pointing to a gap in the fold, he explained that at night, when the sheep were all in the enclosure, he wrapt himself in his blanket and lay down across the gap. He was the door. Nothing could enter but by him. So Christ in His own person is the Door. Christ does not separate Himself from what He taught and wrought, as did the founders of pagan Religions and Schools, or the Old Testament prophets and teachers, none of whom made themselves the subjects of their teaching and prophecy. They acknowledged themselves to be but messengers delivering messages, to be but teachers imparting lessons. In the Koran there are passages expressly calling upon its readers to distinguish between Mohammed and Mohammedanism. But Christ claims, in contrast to this, to be the messenger and the message, the teacher and

the lesson, the preacher and the sermon, the founder of a religion and the religion that He founded. Salvation is not a thing that Christ bestows upon us apart from Himself. He bestows it in union with Himself. We obtain it by being joined to Him by the bonds of faith and love and service. As has been said, "Christianity is Christ." To come to the door, is to come to Christ; to grasp the handle of the door, is to grasp the hand of Christ; to enter the door, is to enter Christ.

(2) "*By me if any man enter in.*"—Christ having declared Himself to be the Door, the only Door, next offers Himself as an entrance to all. By Christ all may enter in. But He does not put it in that way. He says, "By me if *any man* enter in." He thus offers Himself to all, by offering Himself to each. In this way there is brought before us, in these words, two things—(*a*) the *Universality* of our Lord's offer of entrance, and (*b*) its *Particularity*.

(*a*) *Its Universality.*—Christ as the Door offers admission to all. The Kings of Babylon and Persia are represented in the Book of Daniel as issuing their commands and decrees "to all peoples and nations and languages that

dwelt in all the earth." But an appeal which, on the lips of men of limited knowledge of the world and of its inhabitants, savoured of pride and folly is full of reality and significance when proceeding from Him who knows all men, and in whose "hands are all the corners of the earth." And Christ offers admission to all, because He loves all, and died for all; because He is the "propitiation . . . for the sins of the whole world." And He offers admission to all equally, because all the distinctions that separate man from man — distinctions of race and colour, of nationality, of social status and caste—sink into insignificance in view of the great fact that all men "have gone astray like lost sheep," and that Christ has provided in Himself a remedy for them all. In the light of this fact, "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all." False religions are not adapted for unlimited extension. Mohammedanism, Buddhism, Confucianism, born in the East, can never by their very nature take root in the West. But the Christian religion is indigenous nowhere; it can take root and grow equally anywhere. It is a universal religion,

knowing no boundaries of latitude and longitude, knowing no barriers of race and country, but, coming from God the Father of all, it is designed and fitted to be for the salvation of all. "Go ye unto all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." All, then, enter in by Christ, the Door; all are invited to enter in; all are commanded to enter in, "according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations, for the obedience of faith."

(*b*) *The Particularity* of our Lord's offer of entrance. "By me if any man enter in." The narrow sheep-fold door prevents, as we said, any entering unknown to Christ; it also prevents any entering to whom Christ is unknown. "I know my sheep" is one half of the truth, "and am known of mine" is the other. If on Christ's side there is, "I know whom I have chosen," on the believer's side there is, "I know in whom I have believed." Coming to Christ must be personal. Each one in this matter must act for himself. Each one must himself come to Christ, believe in Christ, lay hold of Christ. Each one must personally come to the strait gate, to the wicket gate, to the sheep-fold door, and be admitted. We are told in the

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"I KNOW MY SHEEP AND AM KNOWN OF MINE"

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parable that the sheep hear the shepherd's voice, and know his voice; and so likewise each one must hear the voice and know the voice of Jesus. As Christ is Himself the Door, it is impossible to come to it, and enter it, without knowing Him.

This individual coming to Christ, this personal finding the strait gate, the sheep-fold door, and entering it, implies individual exertion and labour and self-denial. One cannot find it by sitting still. One cannot find it by deputy. Though one may point another to it, and urge him to start in its quest, and may even accompany him thither all the way, still each one must enter it for himself. And that sometimes strenuous effort is required for this is implied in our Saviour's words, "Strive (agonize) to enter in at the strait gate." Intellect, will, heart, thought, resolve, affection, are all brought into action in coming to Christ.

But none sincerely seeking the Door can miss it. The land-doors of the great palaces of Venice are generally small, and placed at the ends of long, narrow, tortuous alleys, and they would be difficult to find but that there are hung out over them great lanterns, *fanali*, that flood them with light. When Christian

asked Evangelist the way to the Celestial City, Evangelist, pointing over a very wide field, said, "Do you see yonder wicket gate?" Christian answered, "No." Then asked Evangelist, "Do you see yonder shining light?" Christian said, "I think I do." "Then," said Evangelist, "keep that light in your eye, and go up directly thereto, so shalt thou see the gate." In the same way, God has hung up over the strait gate, the sheep-fold Door, the lamp of Scripture which gleams out into the darkness of the night, so that men who have strayed like lost sheep in the wilderness of the world may see the light from afar, and, guiding their footsteps by it, may find the Door, and, finding the Door, may find Christ, of whom all Scripture testifies, the great Shepherd and Bishop of their souls.

(3) "*He shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.*"—A door serves two purposes—entrance and exit; and a sheep-fold door gives ingress to the fold and egress to the fields; thus guaranteeing for the sheep, in the one case, (*a*) *Safety*, and in the other, (*b*) *Sustenance.*

And these are the blessings those receive who enter Christ, the Door; for "by me if any man enter in he shall be *saved*, and shall go in

and out, and find *pasture*." The believer in Christ obtains safety and subsistence, security and sustenance; and in the possession of these blessings he obtains all he really needs, a saved life and a sustained life; since "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," and he is "complete in him."

(*a*) *In Christ the Believer obtains Safety.*—"He shall be saved." We need to be saved. The fact of sin existing is patent to all, felt by all, confessed by all. Sin is a fact in our lives, and in the lives of others. There is, as has been said, "a baseness in the blood," a moral malady that is foreign to our nature, of which we are ashamed. And sin means peril, punishment, lostness, death. "Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death." "The wages of sin is death." On this point Canon Liddon has said: "The sternest things that have ever been said, as regards sin's prospects in another world, first passed the tenderest lips that ever proclaimed God's love to man." It is Christ who speaks of the undying worm, and of the unquenchable fire. As sinners we need forgiveness, we need to be saved from sin's punishment. And this is what Christ does for us. This is one half of the salvation He brings us. When the Christian pilgrim, footsore and weary with the

length of the way and the load of sin on his back, knocked at the wicket gate and was admitted, and came up to the cross—when he, in other words, came to Christ, "his burden loosed from off his shoulders, and fell from off his back, and began to tumble, and so continued to do, till it came to the mouth of the sepulchre, where it fell in, and he saw it no more." As of old, so still, the very first words Christ speaks to the sin-oppressed one coming to Him, are, "Son, daughter, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee." "There is no condemnation for them who are in Christ Jesus." And we need to be saved from sin's power. Sin has by nature dominion over us. Subjection to evil is a stern fact confessed by Jew and Gentile alike. Horace said, "I see and approve of the better course, I follow the worse;" and St. Paul said, "The good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." St. Paul thanked God for deliverance from sin's dominion, which he obtained in Christ. And this is the second half of the salvation Christ brings us. He "breaks the power of cancelled sin." He supplants love

to sin by love to Himself, so that the danger of moral ruin by actual transgression is averted. In Christ there is protection from those evil influences and temptations which, inherent in our own constitution, and assailing us from without, endanger peace of mind and life. And no matter how many and how fierce our enemies may be, in Christ we occupy such a position of security that we are delivered from their fear, and we are inspired with confidence. As the sheep within the fold are protected from the thief and the spoiler, the lion and the wolf, so the believer in Christ is protected from him in whom all evil is summed up, Satan, which "as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour": and from "wolves in sheep's clothing," those "grievous wolves" that "enter in among you, not sparing the flock." Where the shepherd in his own person is the door of the fold, he has to be vanquished before the sheep can be reached; and so in the case of the believer, Christ, the Door, has to be overcome before he can be touched. Therefore the Christian's confidence is that of St. Paul, "And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom." In Christ there is safety, security, and salvation.

(*b*) *In Christ the believer obtains Sustenance.*—"He shall go in and out, and find pasture." The sheep-fold is not a prison. The sheep do not enter it to remain there, but rather that, having found in it needed refuge and repose, they may come forth again to the green valleys and hill-sides, and find pasture. Giving ingress to the fold, the door also gives egress to the fields. But when the sheep go out, it is always under the protection and the guidance of the shepherd. He is thus the door of the sheep, as well as the door of the fold.

And in like manner he who enters by Christ into the fold does not enter into a prison—nay, rather, he enters into liberty, "the glorious liberty of the children of God," that "liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free." The very refuge and repose the believer receives in the fold is given him that he may pass out, refreshed and restored, under the guidance of Christ, into a life of activity in the fields; and find pasture, find sustenance. Into what fields? Into all the old, it may be, well-known fields provided by the Divine bounty for our sustenance and pleasure—the fields of Nature, of Society, of Business, of Providence, of Science, of History, of Revelation. Christianity does not narrow, does not restrict, the range of our

CHRIST THE ONE DOOR

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affections, of our interests, and faculties. The very opposite: it broadens and widens them. But all these fields change their aspect to the man who is in contact with Christ. They wear for him a richer green and a fairer aspect, and are bathed in sweeter sunshine. For him, "old things have passed away, and all things have become new;" and all the new things afford him spiritual nourishment.

He sees now the true glory of the realms of Nature, for he sees everywhere the handiwork of Him, "by whom all things were made," and "in whom all things consist." His mind and heart, his soul and spirit, are warmed and fed, as he sees around him the manifestations of his Saviour's wisdom, power, goodness, love, beauty, and purpose. For the Christian's nourishment and support Christ turns the very "wilderness" into "a standing water," and the "dry ground into water springs." For his refreshment and delight the barren waste is transformed into a garden, "the garden of the Lord," and the "desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose." Christ, the Lord of nature, glorifies and interprets His words and His workings to the Christian for his sustenance.

"O world as God has made it, all is beauty,
And knowing this is love, and love is duty."

As the Christian views the course of God's Providential dealings with him, he receives sustenance. For he no longer "stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty" . . . running "upon the thick bosses of his bucklers," but he realises how God in Christ is ordering all things for him in infinite wisdom and in boundless love; and that even though he may be able neither to sow nor reap, nor gather into barns, yet, as it is his Heavenly Father who feeds the fowls of the air and clothes the grass of the field, so shall he be fed and clothed, his bread shall be given him, and his water shall be made sure. And as he performs day by day his daily task, from a high motive and with a high purpose, even that he might, like his Saviour, glorify God on the earth and finish the work given him to do, fresh pastures open out before him.

Likewise in the field of Science the Christian also gathers nourishing fruits. Mr. Ruskin has said: "Men may easily starve in their own granaries—men of science, perhaps, most of all, for they are likely to seek accumulation of their store rather than nourishment from it." And Sir William Dawson speaks of scientists, "who, having found a law, think that thereby they have got quit of a lawgiver." But unlike

such men the scientist, in Christ, sees physical laws to be but the expression of Divine Will; and of every secret which nature yields up to his patient research, he can say, "This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working."

From the realm of History the believer can also gather a rich harvest, for he knows who it is who "sitteth upon the circle of the earth," and who has "divided to the nations their inheritance," and who "doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth." As he studies the annals of his own country and of other lands, he sees how national progress or decline has followed the doing or the transgression of Christ's word and will, who judges the world in righteousness, and ministers judgment to the people in uprightness. He sees how "righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." The events and incidents of history are to him manifestations of Christ's will. "We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old." "Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning."

Lastly, as the Christian explores, day by day, the fields of Holy Scripture, as he reads day by day his daily portion, and inwardly digests it, his mind is enlightened, his heart is sanctified, his better nature, his whole nature, is fed and nourished, as he realises how true his Saviour's words are, "Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." In every page of the Bible the believer finds that which does his soul good; for throughout it all he finds Him of whom it testifies, Jesus Christ, whom he feels to be to his soul the Bread and the Water of Life.

Thus, in Christ, the believer passes into all the departments of life and action, traverses all the fields and realms of God's universe, and gathers spiritual sustenance; he "goes in and out, and finds pasture."

The question for us is, Do we know Christ as the Door? Have we personal, individual fellowship with Him? Have we entered by Christ, the Door? And are we rejoicing in the safety and sustenance He daily gives us? Or are our feet still stumbling on the dark mountains, and are we still starving in the wilderness like lost sheep, far from the Shepherd's tender care? Let such come to

Christ. Behold He cries, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and go in and out, and find pasture." Behold, "I set before you an open door, and no man can shut it." No man can; but He who opens it *can*, and one day *will* shut it; hence His urgent call to us to enter without delay. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able, when once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door." "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." "I AM THE DOOR: AND BY ME IF ANY MAN ENTER IN, HE SHALL BE SAVED, AND SHALL GO IN AND OUT, AND FIND PASTURE."

III

ST. MARK

"And when he (Peter) had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying."—Acts xii. 12.

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ST. MARK WRITING HIS GOSPEL

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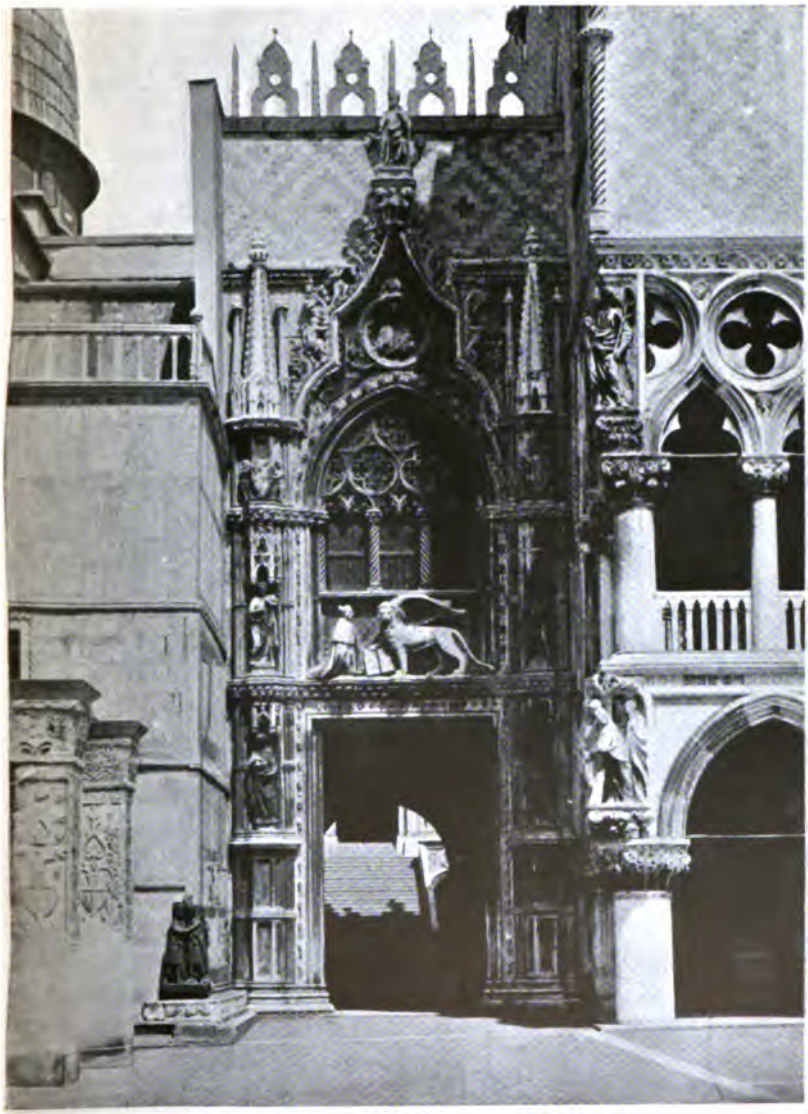
III

ST. MARK

"*John, whose surname was Mark.*"
—Acts xii. 25.

Thomas Carlyle, in his *Life of John Sterling*, remarks that "a true delineation of the smallest man, and of his scene of pilgrimage through life, is capable of interesting the greatest man; that all men are to an unspeakable degree brothers—each man's life a strange emblem of every man's; and that Human Portraits, faithfully drawn, are of all pictures the welcomest on human walls." If that is so, then the life of St. Mark, one of the four biographers of our Lord, about whom we can learn not a little from history, sacred and profane, and from well-authenticated tradition, and whose characteristic Gospel is the oldest we possess, both as to contents and composition, ought to have for us a special interest. And this interest is enhanced for us by this day and this place. For this, the 25th of April, is the day

called in the Christian calendar by his name—St. Mark's Day, when the mind of Christendom is very generally directed to the Evangelist. And we are met together in Venice, a city more than any other in the world identified with him, and which was the old capital of a State peculiarly his own. His name, indeed, in centuries gone by, was synonymous with that of the Venetian Republic. It was to the battle-cry of "*Marco! Marco!*" that the Venetians faced and fought and vanquished many a foe on sea and land. It was in his name that they won the commercial sea-board of the world, and it was in his name that they wisely and humanely ruled it. Averse as the Venetians were from receiving or bestowing decorations, yet they created one order of merit, that of *Cavaliere di San Marco.* And what St. Mark was for a thousand years he is to-day, the patron saint of the city. Its chief square and church, the finest of their kind in the world, are called by his name, *la Piazza di San Marco, la Basilica di San Marco.* This latter was built to receive his body, and it bears the chief facts of his life in mosaic outside on its façade, under the porches of its doors, and inside in its organ-loft, and in the Zeno Chapel; whilst his Gospel is emblazoned in gold and colour on its walls



THE WINGED LION AT PORTAL OF THE DOGE'S PALACE

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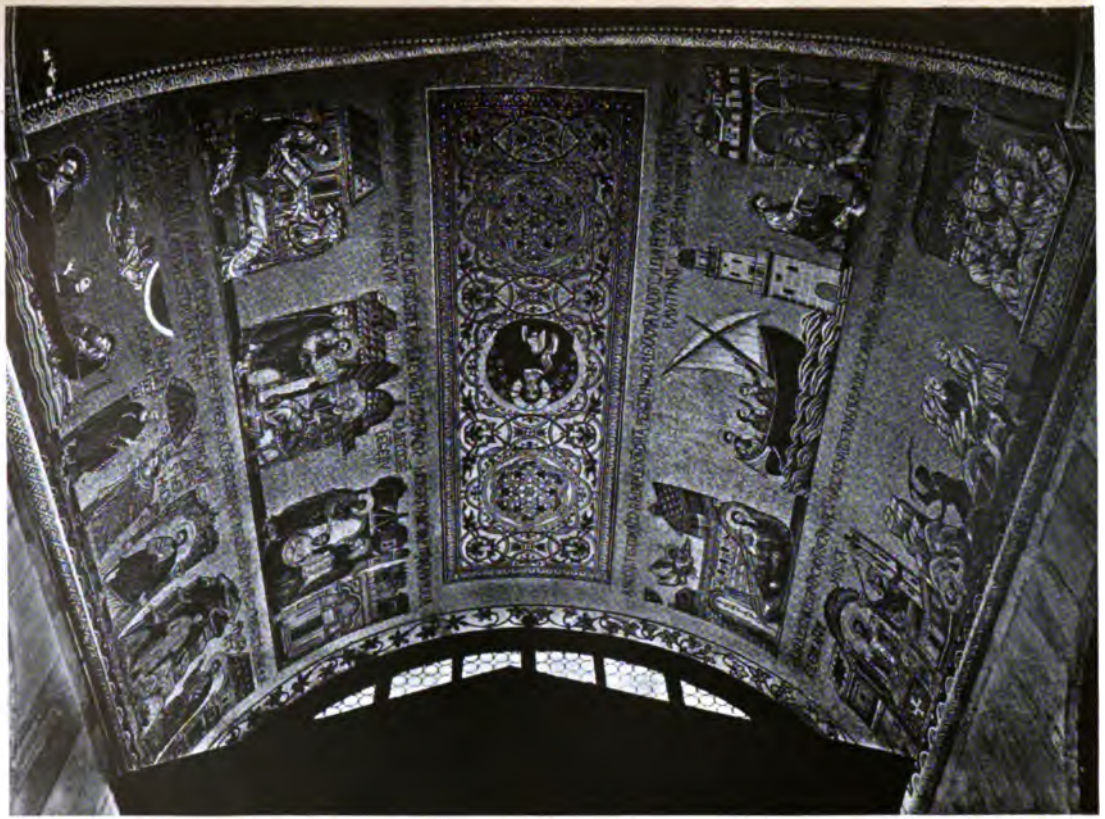
and domes. His emblem, the Winged Lion, with the Gospel in its paw, is displayed throughout the city before the public gaze. As if guardian of the Queen of the Adriatic, it stands looking towards the sea from the broad capital of one of the Piazzetta columns. It shines out in bold relief in gold, against a background of blue, under the feet of the Saviour, on the apex of St. Mark's Church. It calls on all to redeem the time as its flight is noted on the old clock-tower of the Piazza. It keeps watch at the portal of the Ducal Palace. It unfurls its broad wings on the silken banners of the Old Republic as they float on the breeze from the standards on the terrace of the church, and from the tall masts in front of it in the Piazza below. As it used to be stamped on all articles made of the precious metals, and on the silver and gold coins of the Republic, and on its official parchments, in order to guarantee their genuineness, so it is the official stamp and seal of the city's documents to-day.

Finding ourselves thus on St. Mark's day in St. Mark's city, it will surely be our own fault if our conception of the character and life of the Evangelist, and of the lessons they are

fitted to teach us, be not more vividly and more permanently imprinted on our minds than would be possible at other times, and in other places.

(1) THE LIFE OF ST. MARK.—From Acts xii. 12, we learn that St. Mark's home was in Jerusalem, that his mother's name was Mary, and that his own name originally was not Mark but John, just as that of Matthew was Levi, of Paul was Saul, of Peter was Simon, and of Barnabas was Joses. And as a change of name always corresponds with a crisis in life, and as in this case the name laid aside, John, was Jewish, and the name assumed or bestowed upon him, Mark (*Marcus*), was Roman, it is probable that the change marked his conversion from Judaism to Christianity, or his devoting himself to the propagation of his new faith amongst the Gentiles.

His mother seems to have been a convert of the Apostle Peter, and a woman of some wealth and social standing in Jerusalem, for her home was "a church in the house," and a refuge for the Apostles in the early days of persecution; for it was to it that St. Peter went after his deliverance by the hand of the angel from prison, "where," we are told, "many were



SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF ST. MARK

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gathered together praying." Probably St. Mark was himself a convert of the Apostle Peter, for he calls him in the first of his epistles, "Marcus my son." This phrase, however, has been understood by some to express not a spiritual, but a natural relationship—that St. Peter was St. Mark's father. I think that is not tenable, although, at the same time, it may be noted that, in love of the present, in a practical way of looking at things, in a warmth of nature, in a hasty zeal, and in a conspicuous failure of faith on trying occasions, they had much in common.

It is not probable that St. Mark ever knew, or even saw, the Lord Jesus. I am aware that Epiphanius, and Procopius the deacon, count St. Mark among those of whom we read in John vi. 66, "who went back and walked no more with him" (Christ), after His "hard saying" concerning Himself as "the bread of life," and as giving His "flesh for the life of the world"; and I am also aware that he has been identified by some with the "young man" who was with Christ in the garden of Gethsemane, who left his garment in the soldiers' hands, and fled for his life. But the distinct testimony of the early Fathers is against such suppositions. John the Elder, who lived in the apostolic age, is

reported, on the testimony of Papias, who was Bishop of Hierapolis, in Phrygia, at the beginning of the second century, to have said, "He neither heard the Lord, nor followed Him." His rather was that blessedness which our Lord emphasised when resolving the doubts of Thomas—a blessing that has been the heritage of millions, and that may be ours to-day—the blessedness of not seeing with the eye of sense, but with the eye of faith. "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

In the Epistle to the Colossians, St. Paul calls St. Mark "sister's son to Barnabas," but in the Revised Version this is correctly changed to "the cousin of Barnabas," and as Barnabas was a "Levite of Cyprus," some have thought that St. Mark was also a native of Cyprus and of priestly descent.

In his public life we find him associated (1) with St. Barnabas and St. Paul, and then (2) with St. Peter.

(1) He is first mentioned in connection with his kinsman, St. Barnabas, and with St. Paul, when they were at Jerusalem on a mission of charity from the Christians at Antioch. We read in Acts xii. 25, "When they had fulfilled their ministry," they returned to Antioch from

Jerusalem, "and took with them John, whose surname was Mark." This happened about A.D. 44.

(2) He is next mentioned as accompanying St. Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey, as their "minister" (Acts xiii. 5). The word translated "minister" means literally a rower, a servant on board a ship, or a soldier's attendant, and in general an inferior worker. What St. Mark's inferior duties were we cannot with certainty know, but it is not probable that they were all of a menial kind. He most likely administered the rite of Baptism, and perhaps also the Lord's Supper; for, in the early Church, it was the ministry of the Word, the preaching of the Gospel, that the Apostles and Evangelists recognised as their life's work. "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables," was said on one occasion by the twelve Apostles; "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel," was the emphatic utterance of St. Paul. And in these days, when the Sacraments are by some unduly exalted, almost into the category of charms, and are made essential to salvation, we ought to remember that our Lord discourages the notion that material elements are the necessary channels

of spiritual blessings, in such words as these, "The words which I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life;" and that, as a matter of history, the more a man advances in the Divine life, the more he outgrows ordinances.

On their first missionary journey, St. Paul, St. Barnabas, and St. Mark started from Antioch for the fortified seaport of Seleucia. Thence they took ship to Cyprus, preaching the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews at two towns in that island, Salamis and Paphos. From Cyprus they sailed to Pamphylia, in Asia Minor, and went on to Perga, where "John," that is, St. Mark, "departing from them," made his way back to the sea-coast at Attalia, whence he sailed to Antioch, and thence returned to Jerusalem. His courage failed him, and little wonder that it did, when he realised the nature of the country Paul and Barnabas were about to traverse. It is to the hardships suffered in that region that St. Paul refers in the eleventh chapter of his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, where he speaks of being "in journeyings often"—he had to travel long distances on foot along rough roads; "in perils of rivers"—he had to ford wild bridgeless mountain torrents; "in perils

ST. MARK WRITING HIS GOSPEL

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of robbers"—the mountains were the haunts of brigands; "in perils from my countrymen" —as at Iconium, where, we read, "the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles," and "there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use them despitefully, and to stone them," which threats were carried out at Lystra, the evangelists' next stopping place, whither their persecutors followed them. Such sufferings and dangers might well daunt the as yet timid mind of St. Mark.

(3) By-and-by St. Paul and St. Barnabas, having completed their missionary tour in Asia Minor, in which they often "hazarded their lives" for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, returned likewise to Antioch and Jerusalem, and, having "rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles," they were ready to start again. St. Mark was present on this occasion, and heard the story of their missionary adventures, part of which he had shared, and he offered to go with them. He had failed once, but now he felt confident that he would not do so a second time. St. Barnabas was anxious to take him, but, we read, St. Paul opposed it—"Paul thought it not good

to take him with them who departed from them from Pamphylia and went not with them to the work." St. Barnabas, however, was "determined to take him." And then, we read, "the contention was so sharp between them that they separated the one from the other, and so Barnabas took Mark and sailed unto Cyprus," his native place.

(4) Strange enough, the next time he is mentioned we read of him as being with St. Paul in Rome, so he must have regained the Apostle's confidence and esteem; for in his Epistle to the Colossians, written from Rome, he says, "Aristarchus, my fellow-prisoner, saluteth you, and Marcus, the cousin of Barnabas . . . These only are my fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me."

(5) St. Mark, however, for some reason, left St. Paul, and went to Colossæ in Phrygia, and St. Paul again wrote to the Colossians about him, "touching whom ye received commandments; if he come unto you, receive him."

(6) The closing incident of the connection of St. Paul and St. Mark is a touching one. We read of it in the last chapter of the Second Epistle to Timothy. St. Paul was almost alone in his old age in Rome, and his martyrdom

was staring him in the face. Demas, Crescens, and Titus, he tells us, had left him; "only Luke is with me." Therefore he wrote to Timothy: "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me," and "take Mark, and bring him with thee, for he is profitable to me for the ministry." Apparently, however, St. Mark and St. Paul never met again.

(7) The next time we read of St. Mark he was with St. Peter at Babylon, in Assyria. Some, however, have maintained that by Babylon in this case is meant Rome. But there is no real foundation for such a belief. Babylon, in Assyria, was at that time a great seat of Jewish culture, and we find St. Peter writing to the "strangers scattered abroad," to whom his epistles are addressed, "The Church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you, and so doth Marcus my son."

(8) For the closing scenes of St. Mark's life we have to fall back upon tradition, which, though having no canonical authority, had an early and widespread ecclesiastical sanction. He is supposed, whilst with St. Peter, to have acted as his interpreter, secretary, or amanuensis; and to have settled ultimately at Alexandria in Egypt, where he became its first Bishop. In that position he

is said to have gained the friendship of Philo, the Jewish philosopher and Greek scholar, and to have written the Gospel which bears his name, embodying in it the substance of St. Peter's oral teaching. It is, as I have said, the oldest of the synoptic Gospels, written, probably, after the deaths of St. Peter and St. Paul, but before St. Matthew and St. Luke had put pen to parchment. Bishop Westcott, in his *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, gives this account of the compilation of the Gospel from the pen of Papias, to whom I have already had occasion to refer: "This also the Elder" (John, the authority of Papias) "used to say, Mark having become Peter's interpreter, wrote accurately all that he remembered, or that he (Peter) mentioned: though he did not record in order that which was either said or done by Christ, for he neither heard the Lord, nor followed Him, but subsequently, as I said, attached himself to Peter, who used to frame his teaching to meet the wants of his hearers, but not as making a connective narrative of the Lord's discourses. So Mark committed no error, as he wrote down some particulars just as he recalled them to mind or as he

ST. MARK SUBMITTING HIS GOSPEL FOR ST. PETER'S APPROVAL

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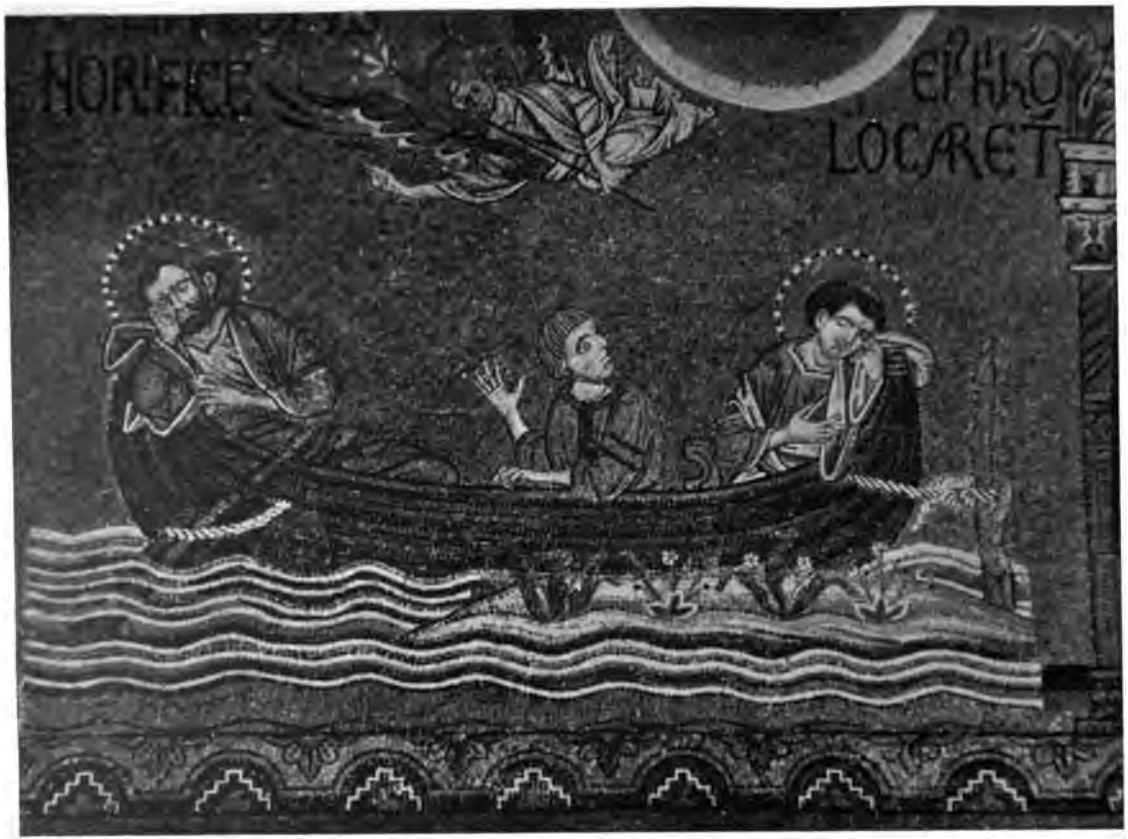
(Peter) narrated them. For he took heed to one thing, to omit none of the facts that he heard, and to make no false statement in his account of them." With these statements agree the words of Irenæus, who wrote some fifty years later: "After the decease of these (Peter and Paul), Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, himself also has handed down to us in writing the things which were preached by Peter." Similar testimony is borne by Clement of Alexandria, by Origen, by Tertullian, and by Eusebius. Clement of Alexandria says (I use Bishop Westcott's translation): "When St. Peter had publicly preached the Gospel in Rome, and declared the Gospel by inspiration, those who were present, being many, urged St. Mark, as one who had followed him from a distant time and remembered what he said, to record what he stated; and that he, having made his Gospel, gave it to those who made the request of him; and that Peter, when he was aware of this, took pains neither to hinder him nor to encourage him in his work." Origen says, "Mark made the Gospel as Peter guided him." Tertullian says, "The Gospel of Mark is maintained to be Peter's, whose interpreter he was;" whilst Eusebius

tells us that St. Peter "sanctioned the writing of Mark for the use of the Church."

I have mentioned the Zeno Chapel, in St. Mark's Church, as containing mosaics of the Evangelist, and some of these embody the testimony of the writers above quoted. In one section St. Mark is represented sitting at a low square table, writing his Gospel, the open page showing the words *Initium Evangelii.* The disciples who are said to have urged him to undertake the work look on, and the legend of the picture is "*Sanctus Marcus rogatus a fratribus scripsit Evangelium.*" In another mosaic, St. Mark, accompanied by these same disciples, is seen submitting his Gospel to the inspection of St. Peter, who, according to the legend inscribed above it, approves of it, and hands it over to be read in the Church—"*Sanctus Petrus approbat Evangelium Sancti Marci, et tradit Ecclesiæ legendum.*"

We now come to the tradition that is concerned more especially with St. Mark's connection with Venice. When Bishop of Alexandria he used to go on evangelistic journeys accompanied by his minister, St. Hermagoras. One of these was northward round the coast of Dalmatia to Aquileia at the head of the Adriatic Sea—*Roma Secunda*, as it was called,



ST. MARK, STRANDED IN LAGOON, RECEIVING ANGELIC VISION

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from having been a favourite resort of the Roman emperors and nobility. Some of the mosaics in the Zeno Chapel, and in the organ-loft of St. Mark's Church, represent St. Mark preaching and baptizing in that city; and to this day there are legends in Aquileia and in other places along that coast regarding him, for his work was most successful. The Church at Aquileia became one of much influence, and it furnished to the Apostles' Creed the clause, "He descended into hell." Tradition then says that, on leaving Aquileia, St. Mark's boat was carried by a storm amongst the lagoons of Venice, and grounded on an island where now stands the Church of *San Francesco della Vigna.* As he lay stranded in his boat, waiting for the rising tide to float it off, an angel appeared to him, who told him not to fear, for that there a great city would one day arise to his honour, where he would have many converts. In the Zeno Chapel there is a mosaic which shows St. Mark receiving this vision, as he lies asleep in his boat, which is tied to a stake amongst the reeds of the island; and the legend, which is always inscribed on the open page of his Gospel in the paw of his symbol, the Winged Lion, is the first part of the angel's message: "*Pax tibi, Marce, Evangelista meus*"

(Peace to thee, O Mark, My Evangelist). Mr. Ruskin, in his *Stones of Venice*, quotes a tradition which makes the evangelising work of St. Mark at Aquileia and these Venetian islands precede his going to Egypt, so that he "was thus in some sort the first Bishop of the Venetian Isles and people." In any case, we may say that he added this region to his episcopal see.

According to Jerome, St. Mark died at Alexandria, and tradition says he died a martyr's death, sealing his testimony, as, we believe, did most of the Apostles, with his blood. His martyrdom is depicted both in the Zeno Chapel and in St. Mark's organ-loft. These mosaics show him in the act of celebrating the Holy Communion, when a man steals up and strikes him with a club. Another man is shown throwing a noose round his neck and strangling him. His dead body is afterwards dragged through the streets of the city. Another mosaic shows the disciples taking up his body, and putting it in a sarcophagus. Afterwards this was placed in a church built to his memory and called by his name.

What we have further to say concerns chiefly his body, and here we leave tradition and touch history. In 421—that is some four

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EMBARKATION OF ST. MARK'S BODY

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hundred years after St. Mark visited these Venetian shores—Attila and his Huns burned the mainland cities of Aquileia, Heracleia, Gradium, Altinum, and other places where he had evangelised; and the inhabitants, the descendants of his converts, fled for dear life to these lagoons, and, with the inhabitants of Padua, founded the city of Venice; whereby the first half of the prophecy made by the angel to the Evangelist was fulfilled, which said, "Here a great city shall arise." Then four more centuries passed away, when the second part of the prophecy was fulfilled; for in 829 the body of St. Mark was brought from Alexandria to Venice, and it was then that the famous historic connection between the Saint and the city began—the Church of St. Mark was built to receive his body; the city was dedicated to his honour, thus supplanting St. Theodore as its patron saint; his symbol of the Winged Lion became the arms of the city, and the national standard; and his name became for ever linked with the fortunes of the great Republic. Thus was dedicated "to his honour" that "glorious city in the sea," which

"*Rose, like an exhalation from the deep,*
A vast metropolis, with glistering spires,

With theatres, basilicas adorned;
A scene of light and glory, a dominion,
That has endured the longest among men."

The story of the obtaining of the body and of the bringing it to Venice is admirably told in mosaic in St. Mark's Church. It is as follows:—Two Venetian sea captains, Buono of Malamocco, and Rustico of Torcello, happened to be in the port of Alexandria with their ships, when they saw with indignation the Saracens, by order of the Caliph, destroying Christian churches, and especially that of St. Mark, in order that a palace might be built for him of their most precious marbles (*i più scelti marmi*). Accordingly they thought the moment opportune for obtaining possession of the Evangelist's body. By the help of its custodian, Stauratius, a monk, and that of Theodorus, a priest, the sarcophagus was opened and the body taken out. The difficulty of getting it through the customs, and on board one of the ships, without detection was accomplished by stowing it away at the bottom of a basket, and heaping on the top of it *Kanzir* (swine's flesh), which caused the Mohammedan officials to turn away from the examination of the basket in disgust. Other

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RECEPTION OF ST. MARK'S BODY IN VENICE

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mosaics show the safe arrival of the ships at Venice with their precious freight, and its reception by the Doge, priests, and people.

"*Pontifices, Clerus, Populus, Dux mente serenus,*
Laudibus atque choris, excipiunt dulce canoris."

The priest and custodian who favoured the enterprise came also to Venice, and their names, with those of the two captains, are inscribed with honour on the mosaics and also in the archives of the church. Indeed Stauratius, the priest, became its first *primicerio*, or Dean.

The body of St. Mark was first deposited in a tower of the original Ducal Palace, where it remained three years, from 829 to 832, when it was removed to the first St. Mark's Church, completed that latter year to receive it. The tower is still standing, having been utilised to form part of the treasury of the present church, doubtless because of its connection with St. Mark. When this earliest church was burned in 976, the body was lost, and only recovered in 1094. It was then deposited in the crypt of the present church. This crypt, or rather the mausoleum in it, which contained St. Mark's body, was called *la confessione* (the confession), not because it was

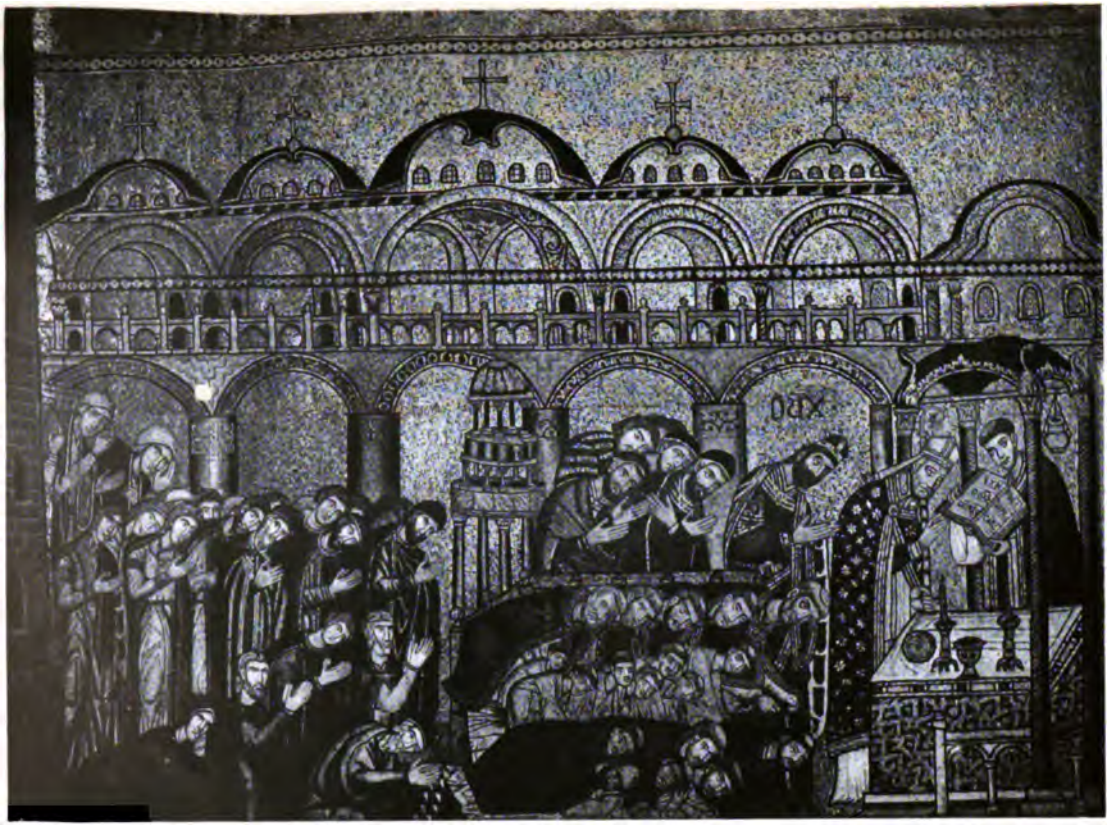
a place where confessions were made, but because it contained the remains of a martyr, of one who had "witnessed a good confession." In this place it remained till 1811—that is, for the long period of 717 years—when it was taken up into the church, as, at high tide, the crypt was frequently full of water. Before placing it under the high altar of the church, where it now is, the sarcophagus was opened by order of the Italian Government, and in the presence of its representatives. It enclosed a coffin of wood, which was found to contain the chief parts of a human skeleton, a box of balsam, some coins, and a plate stating, "In the year of the incarnation of Jesus Christ, 1094, in the 8th day of the current month, October, in the reign of the Doge Vital Falier, this mausoleum was made." On the inner side of the stone corner of the sarcophagus were the letters, rudely cut, S. MA.

In the treasury of St. Mark's Church one of the first things that strikes the eye is a tall, narrow, gracefully-formed chair, cut out of a single block of Cipoline marble, and bearing symbolic sculptures of the Evangelists, and of the four rivers of Paradise, now become the four streams of the Gospel narrative. It is called the Chair of St. Mark, and is said to

have been used by him when he was Bishop of Alexandria. There is also preserved in this treasury a fragment of manuscript long spoken of as part of the Latin original of St. Mark's Gospel, and as bearing his signature. But it is beyond question that St. Mark wrote his Gospel in Greek, not in Latin, and it is equally certain that this fragment is but part of a fifth or sixth century copy of Jerome's Vulgate, the rest of which is preserved in the little mountain town of Cividale in Fruili, to the north of Venice, and at Prague. Some of the best pictures of the great Venetian masters, such as Titian and Tintoretto, are illustrative of the historic and legendary life of the Evangelist; and many of the old legendary tales of Venetians, such as that of the Fisherman and the Ring, are concerned with his interposition, in times of difficulty and danger, on behalf of the city and the republic.

II. The Lessons of St. Mark's Life.—(1) *The Evangelist St. Mark is a splendid example of one who "out of weakness became strong."* His failure on his first missionary journey, though not unnatural, was very severely blamed in the early Church, so that Chrysostom calls him in the *Philosophumena*, κολοβοδάκτυλος, which means literally "maimed finger." This

was a term applied to cowards, as such were accustomed to maim their fingers to prevent themselves from being called up for military service. The word "poltroon," from the Latin, *police truncus*, means literally and figuratively the same thing. And some have therefore expressed surprise (and Mr. Ruskin, strange to say, is amongst the number) that the Lion, the bravest of animals, should have been chosen to represent him. As I shall have occasion to show afterwards, the Lion symbolises not Mark himself, but Christ as represented in his Gospel. But apart from that, as we have seen from our study of St. Mark's life, if he failed at first, he afterwards gathered courage and strength. St. Paul reinstated him in his confidence, and speaks of him in terms of affection and commendation in not less than three of his Epistles—in that to the Colossians, the second to Timothy, and in that to Philemon, calling him his "fellow-worker unto the kingdom of God," and his "fellow-labourer," and testifying that he had been a comfort unto him and profitable to him in the ministry, for which reasons he begged Timothy to bring him to Rome that he might be with him in his labours and sufferings. He accompanied the Apostle Peter to Babylon, in Assyria, and



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PRAYER FOR DISCOVERY OF ST. MARK'S BODY

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laboured with him there, and afterwards was with him in Alexandria. He preserved the Apostle Peter's oral teaching in the invaluable Gospel that bears his name. He voyaged up the Dalmatian coast to Aquileia, and visited these lagoons, evangelising everywhere. And at last, if we credit tradition, he sealed his testimony with his blood. He is not unworthy to be represented even by the Lion.

"Once like a broken bow Mark sprang aside:
Till grace recalled him to a worthier course,
To feeble hands and knees increasing force,
Till God was magnified.

And now a strong evangelist, St. Mark
Hath for his sign a Lion in his strength;
And thro' the stormy water's breadth and length
He helps to steer God's ark."

I have sometimes thought that St. Mark, in this lesson of his life, out of weakness becoming strong, very appropriately prefigured the Venetians, with whom he has been so intimately united. He was their prototype. They too, "out of weakness, became strong." When they came to settle in these lagoons they were poor fugitives flying before their enemies, who had driven them from their mainland homes, to which, burned and in

ashes, they could never return. They were weak, but they became strong. The very hardships and struggles they had to endure ennobled them. They conquered nature. They found the soil of Venice shifting mud and sand, but a little way raised above the flowing tide, and fitted but to bear the weight of wooden huts. They changed it into stable ground, on which, as on a basis of rock, they raised their marble palaces, the beauty and the endurance of which are the admiration of the world. Conquering nature under their feet, they conquered it in their own hearts. They took the Bible as their charter, writing it in the words of a universal language, that of colour and design, on the walls of St. Mark's Church, and writing it also on the fleshy tablets of their hearts. From being weak fugitives, they became conquerors, and heroes, and princes in the earth.

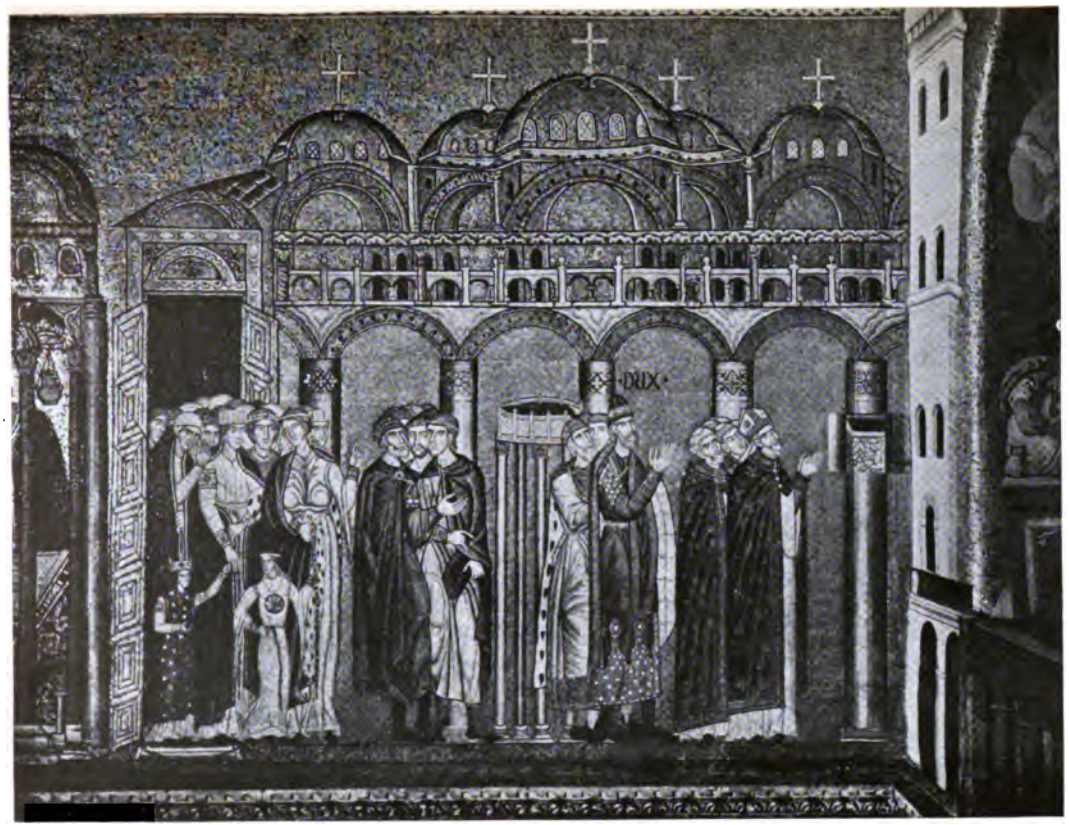
So also it may be with us. By God's grace, and a willing mind, our natural weaknesses may become our strong points. Where we have shown ourselves weak, we may show ourselves strong. If we have met unforeseen and unexpected difficulties in our setting out on our Christian pilgrimage—Sloughs of Despond to cross, and Hills of Difficulty to

climb, and Vanity Fairs and Valleys of Humiliation to pass through—and if we have been tempted to turn back, as St. Mark did on his first missionary journey, let us take heart and persevere, believing that we shall be strengthened for danger and difficulty, and strengthened by danger and difficulty. If we are conscious of any weak point in the fortifications of the Town of Mansoul, be it at Ear-gate, Eye-gate, Mouth-gate, Nose-gate, or Feel-gate, let us set a double watch at that point. The history of Venice affords not a few examples of men who so recovered themselves as to rise from a prison step by step to a throne. Michele Steno, who in 1355 was imprisoned for bad conduct, was in 1400 elected Doge, and Antonio Grimani, who in 1499 was put in prison for losing a sea-fight, was in 1521 chosen Doge.

Discomfiture for the Christian does not mean defeat. Like the tribe of Gad, he may be overcome, but he shall overcome at the last. He can buy back the opportunity, recover lost ground, and win victories on the very fields where he had suffered defeat. And let us remember that every effort of the will put forth to resist temptation will strengthen the will, and make it stronger to resist the same temptation the next time it assails us.

Every blow struck in the spiritual battle we are waging will strengthen the arm for future combat. And let us never forget that the Christian life is a battle, a struggle, a long and a fierce campaign against the world, the devil, and the flesh, and that the promise is not to those who have never become faint-hearted, who have never been defeated, who have never fallen, but to those who, though defeated, are never vanquished, and who at last overcome by the blood of the Lamb: "he that endureth to the end shall be saved."

(2) *St. Mark was a splendid example of one whose "last works were more than the first."*—In the Book of Revelation it is said of the Church at Thyatira, "I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first." Thyatira was not a perfect Church, was not a faultless Church, but it was a progressing Church. As time went on, as years passed away, the Christians of Thyatira became more diligent, more faithful, more devoted, more energetic in the Master's service. So was it with St. Mark. He failed at first, he accomplished little at first, but afterwards he worked diligently and successfully,



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REDISCOVERY OF ST. MARK'S BODY

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and accomplished great things. At first, as we have seen, he was the servant of St. Paul, performing inferior duties, and then he was his colleague, and companion, and a comfort to him in his ministry. Later he was St. Peter's amanuensis. He became an evangelist, and a missionary himself, and the first Bishop of Alexandria and of the Venetian lagoons. Greatest honour of all, he became our Lord's biographer, giving to the Church and the world his characteristic Gospel. His name and influence are indissolubly associated with the most stable and the most enduring Republic the world has as yet seen. And now, through the translation of his Gospel into many languages, and by its circulation in many lands, his work for Christ is more manifold and more effective than before. Truly his last works were more than his first.

Let us ask ourselves, Is it so with us? Are we progressing in the Christian life? Does our present compare favourably with our past? Are we growing in devotion to Christ, and in works for Him? As trees, planted by the rivers of water, are we bringing forth fruits of righteousness in ever-increasing abundance? It is not always so. Sometimes there is a standing still. Sometimes there is a going

backward. The tendency in nature is to go back to the wild original. The charge against the Church at Ephesus was that its love to Christ had decreased in intensity and in fervour. The charge against the Church at Laodicea was that it had become lukewarm—"neither cold nor hot." The charge against the Church at Sardis was that it had a name to live and was dead. There is thus a tendency to retrograde, to backslide, as well as a tendency to advance and progress. The one is the tendency of nature, the other is the tendency of grace. The one is carnal, the other is spiritual. The one is earthly, the other is heavenly.

Frederick Robertson, speaking of God's work in creation, says: "God proceeded from the less perfect to the more perfect—first inorganic life, after that the vegetable, then the animal, and then by degrees man, made in the image of his Creator. But not only were the more perfect forms of life created last, but more work was done at the close than at the beginning of the creative period. We are told that God did almost nothing on the second day, except the separation of the waters which were above from the waters which were below the earth, but on the sixth all the animals were created, and man, the top and crown of all

things." "We find the same principle," he says, "in all that God does. And it is true of every work that will stand the test of time. And the lesson we learn is that the man who is not advancing is directly reversing the order of God." God means us ever to advance. He means our last works to be both more numerous and more important than our first ones. He makes the possibility of this the reward of faithful service. If we use faithfully one talent, He will add to it ten talents more. If we have ruled well one city, ten cities will be given us to rule over. The more we do, the more we can do, and the better will be our work. Let us see that we are following the Divine law of accelerated progress, and not the natural law of accelerated retrogression. Let us see that, like St. Mark, our last works are more numerous and better than our first.

(3) *Lastly, the secret of St. Mark's progress in character and life was his union with Christ.* —Very early in the Christian Church divisions and separations amongst its members took place. The Apostle Paul wrote thus to the Corinthians: "Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ." Some, looking too exclusively at the leading doctrine

of St. Paul's teaching, that of justification by faith, called themselves by his name; others, regarding similarly the Judaising tendencies of St. Peter, became his followers; whilst a third party, clinging to the philosophical teaching of the Alexandrian school, said, "We are of Apollos." Now, it is remarkable that St. Mark had a connection with all these three leaders. He was St. Paul's valued fellow-worker, he was St. Peter's amanuensis, and he imbibed the teaching of Apollos. His Gospel was the outcome of St. Peter's teaching, yet it was written in Greek for the Gentile converts at Rome, whilst he himself was Bishop of Alexandria. He combined the excellences of all for his enrichment of mind, whilst identifying himself exclusively with none, but only with Christ —realising that in Christ all things were his, "whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come."

Glorying thus not in man, but in Christ, his mind dwelt particularly on the strength of Christ. There is a tendency to admire in another what one lacks himself; St. Mark therefore, lacking naturally to a certain extent strength of character, admired the strength of Christ—thought of it, wrote of it, desired it,

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CHAIR OF ST. MARK

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and never ceased to pursue it. This appears from the nature of his Gospel. In it Christ is represented as the strong man armed, the Lion of the tribe of Judah. St. Mark gives us but little of what Christ said. He omits almost all His parables and discourses. He omits the Sermon on the Mount. There are but four short parables in the whole book. He passes over Christ's infancy entirely. But he exhibits Christ in the strength of His manhood as the miracle worker. He relates nearly all the miracles that are recorded by Matthew and Luke, adding many new particulars to them; and he relates some that these evangelists pass over—as, for example, the cure of the man by the Sea of Galilee, who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and the cure of the blind man at Bethsaida. St. Mark develops the character and the mission of Christ in deeds, acts, works, rather than in words. He sets forth the active ministry of Christ—His power over man, over nature, over evil spirits. And it is because of his doing this that He is represented by the lion. This symbol stands for Christ as set forth in St. Mark's Gospel. Because He is there set forth to be the Lion of the tribe of Judah, therefore His symbol is the Lion.

It is true, however, that this symbol does also represent St. Mark himself, though only in a secondary and subordinate sense. For St. Mark became like his ideal. As he dwelt on Christ's strength he became strong. Representing Christ as the Lion, he himself became lion-hearted.

And in like manner, if we are to conquer cowardice and weakness—if we are to conquer our natural faults and failings, and become eminent in works of courage and of faith, it is from Christ that we must draw our inspiration and our strength. We may draw these to a limited extent from St. Mark, as did the Venetians. Not seldom, for example, when, taken by surprise or overpowered by numbers, they were losing ground in the battle, did their leader, rushing into the thickest of the fight with the cry, "He that loves St. Mark follow me," turn defeat into victory. Drawing animation thus from St. Mark, we may draw it also from all good men whose characters and lives we allow to influence us; but it is necessary to go at all times beyond them to the Source whence they drew it—to Christ Himself. Indeed the mission of St. Mark and of all Christians is to point to Him. It is His greatness they show forth. It is His strength that is made

perfect in their weakness. It is through Christ alone, therefore, that we can conquer. We read in the Book of the Revelation that the Saints overcame by the blood of the Lamb. If we go, then, to Christ with all our doubts and fears, with all our faults and failings, with all our poverty and weakness, He will enrich and strengthen us, and fill us out of His own inexhaustible fulness, making His strength sufficient for us, perfecting His strength in our weakness, causing us to advance and progress towards the measure of the stature of the fulness of the perfect man in Him. He will cause us to abound in every good work. He will enable us to make our last works more than our first.

> "Animate our souls by the example of all those who, having fought a good fight here below, in the power of the same faith, are now safe and rest till the day of Christ's coming."

IV

STONES OF MEMORIAL

"To him that overcometh will I give . . . a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."—Rev. ii. 17.

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JUDGMENT OF SOLOMON (see page 112)

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IV

STONES OF MEMORIAL

"*What mean ye by these stones?*"

—Joshua iv. 6.

It is remarkable how frequently stones are spoken of in Scripture as being used as monuments and memorials of important historic events, and as signs and symbols of the great moral and spiritual lessons which these events were fitted to teach. They were visible helps to memory. By means of them the historic fact and its lesson were permanently recorded, and their remembrance kept alive from generation to generation. Thus we read that Jacob, at Bethel, took the stone that had served as his pillow, and set it up as a pillar in remembrance of the vision he had received of the ladder reaching from earth to heaven, and of the assurance God gave him of His presence and help. So at Mizpah, on the Mount of Gilead, Jacob and Laban his father-in-law, made an heap of stones in the form of a pillar, as a

witness of the covenant they had made between them. Likewise at Shechem, Joshua, when, just before his death, he bound the people by a covenant to serve God only, "took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord," as a stone of witness. Again, in remembrance of the victory the children of Israel obtained at Mizpeh, because "the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines and discomfited them . . . Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." In like manner in the narrative, from which my text is taken, of the miraculous passing of the children of Israel across the river Jordan dry-shod, the waters from above standing up as an heap, and the waters below failing and being cut off, Joshua, instructed by God, commanded twelve men, out of every tribe a man, to take up a stone on his shoulder out of the midst of Jordan, where the priests' feet stood firm, and to carry it to Gilgal, where they were to lodge that night. This having been done, we read, "those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal. And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children

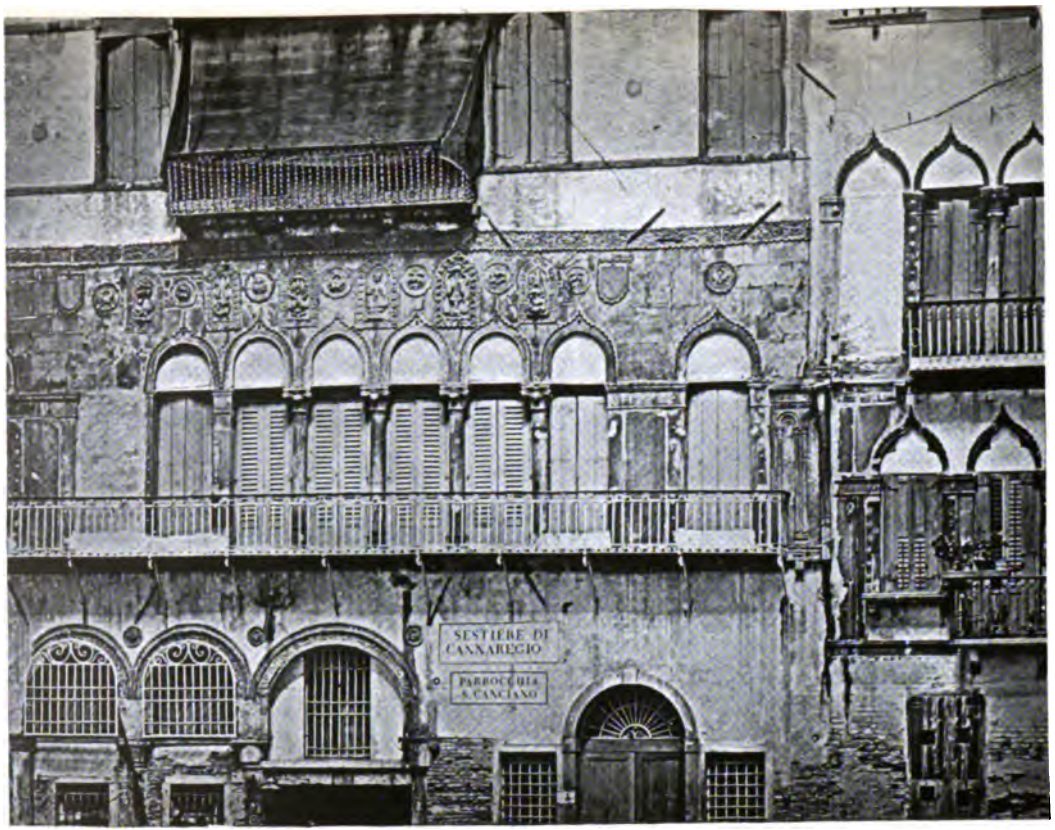
shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? Then ye shall answer them, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land, and these stones shall be a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever." Thus these stones had a message for each particular tribe, and for the nation as a whole, reminding them of God's marvellous kindness in miraculously leading them through the deep waters, and planting them in the land of promise.

The custom of erecting memorial stones, so prevalent amongst the children of Israel, was prevalent also amongst the old Venetians. In various parts of the dominions of the Republic such stones are to be seen, but more especially in Venice. Here they meet the eye at every turn. Many of them are monuments and memorials of great historic events, and exhibit the spirit and temper of a great people, and are fitted to teach useful lessons both to the stranger resident in this city, and to the traveller passing through it. Indeed, stones of all kinds in Venice have a significance that they do not possess in other cities; for Venice is not a city of stone, it is a city of brick. I think people are apt to forget this fact. Perhaps the title that Mr. Ruskin has given to his invaluable books on Venice, *The Stones of*

Venice, tends a little to mislead us on this point. In Venice there is not one stone building. All its churches, all its palaces, all its dwelling-houses are of brick. Their foundations are of stone, the walls are more or less faced and ornamented with stone, but the whole body of every building is of brick. St. Mark's Church is of brick, though it is encrusted outside and inside with precious marbles. The walls of the Doges' Palace are of brick, encased with a coating of red and white marbles cut into the form of large bricks.

Thus, when stones were used in Venice, they were used for special reasons, to serve special purposes, and to teach special lessons. Let us now ask, in regard to the more conspicuous of them, the question of the text, "What mean ye by these stones?"

(1) *Stones of Christian faith and life.*—In different parts of the city there are set into the front of palaces, stones, beautifully cut and carved, in the form of Byzantine crosses; and others, called *pateræ*, some round and some oblong, with birds and animals sculptured upon them, the bird generally standing on the back of the animal, and pecking at it. These exist in different positions and combinations. Generally the cross is set above the apex of the



PATERÆ WITH BIRDS AND ANIMALS
(CA' DA MOSTA)

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principal Gothic windows, and the *pateræ* between them, but sometimes these positions are reversed. A good example of these crosses and *pateræ* is to be seen on a house, partly Byzantine and partly Gothic, in Campo Mater Domini, near the Rialto, one of the oldest and most interesting smaller squares of the city. This house has four crosses, one above the pointed arch of each of its central windows, and nine *pateræ* set between and above these crosses. An old Gothic house in this same campo, with chequered front, has a *pateræ* above each window. The beautiful little Byzantine palace, La Madonnetta, on the Grand Canal, one of the few examples of that early architecture remaining in the city, has a *pateræ* over each of its eight windows, and in the centre above all a cross in relief on a diamond-shaped slab of red marble. The Palazzo Vetturi, in Campo S. Maria Formosa, has the same arrangement of *pateræ*, and single crosses, over its eight Gothic windows. The old Ca' Da Mosta, on the Grand Canal, just above the Rialto Bridge, which was the house of Alvise Da Mosta, one of the fifteenth century discoverers of India; and the house of the Doge Marin Falier, who was beheaded for treason in 1355, which is situated at the bridge of

SS. Apostoli, are decorated with many *pateræ*, and other Byzantine Christian symbols, such as that of peacocks drinking out of a fountain, by which is signified eternal life.

The tympanums of Gothic doorways are very generally filled with *Stones of Christian Faith and Life.* These stones bear above the shield of the family a figure of the "Angel of His Presence"—that is, Jesus Christ; and below, supporting the shield, two attendant angels. Christ's right hand is usually raised in blessing, and in His left He holds a globe of the world, with a cross upon it. Mr. Ruskin calls this arrangement "the general theory of an old Venetian doorway." These stones are very numerous in every quarter of the city. They exist, for example, over the doorways of the following houses:—Palazzo Trevisan, in Campo San Maurizio; Ca' Popolin, in Campo Santa Margherita; a house in Calle Renier, which runs off that campo; a house in Rio Terrà Seconda, Sant' Agostin; a house at Ponte del Forner, Fondamenta Pesero; a palace in Calle dell' Arco; a house at Ponte del Cavallo, near the Campo of SS. Giovanni and Paolo; on the arch that spans the entrance to the Corte del Verier, which runs out of that *campo;* and on a castellated gateway that

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PEACOCKS—SYMBOL OF REGENERATED LIFE

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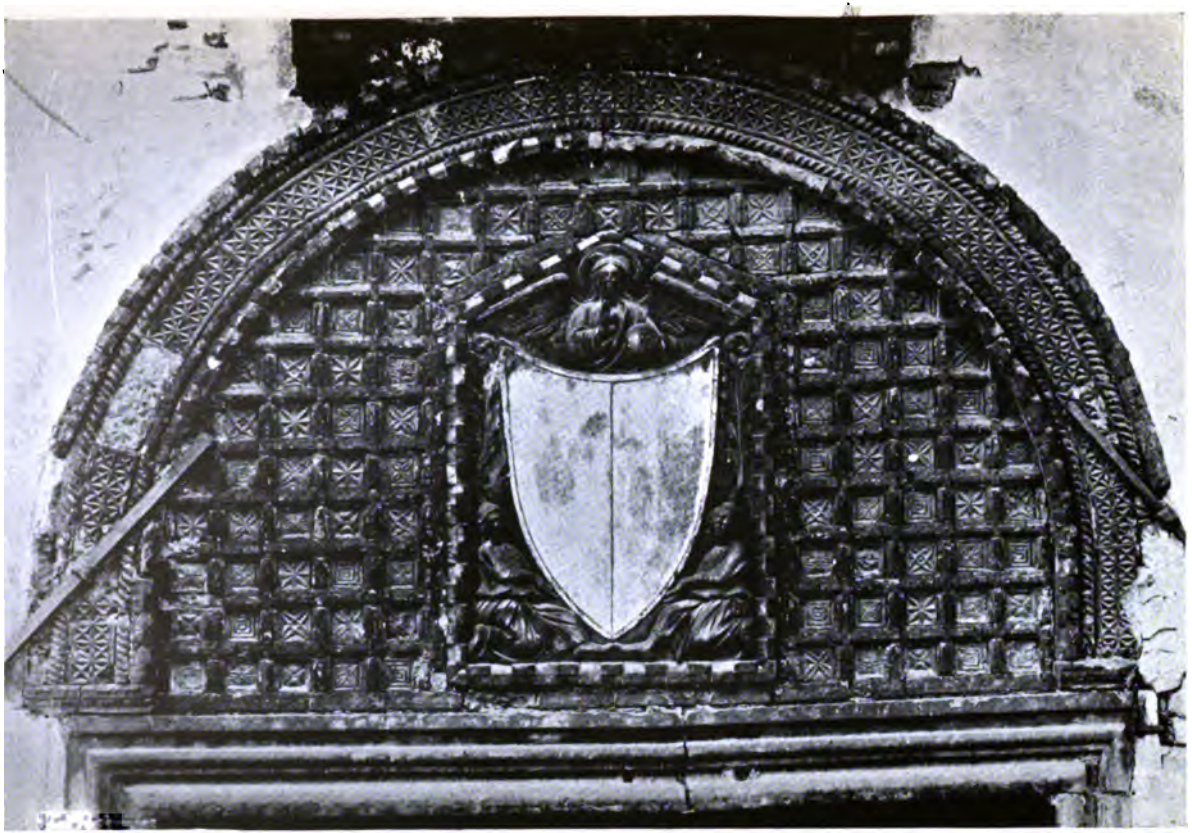
gives entrance to Corte delle Muneghe, near the Church of the Madonna dei Miracoli. The house at Ponte del Forner has, besides "The Angel of His Presence" over the door, the symbols of the four Evangelists, the Eagle, the Lion, the Man, and the Ox, placed in the spaces between the arches of its five central Gothic windows. Their wings are extended so that they touch each other, and each holds up to view his open Gospel.

What, let us ask, is the meaning of these stones? They witness to the Christian faith and life of those who built, and owned, and tenanted these palaces. By the cross they declared that their faith was in Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. Like the Apostle Paul, they said that they gloried in the cross of Christ. His death of atonement for their sins was the keystone of their creed. And by the *pateræ* they declared that they were living a Christian life—that, as the bird, the creature of the pure ethereal region of the sky above, was struggling to overcome the animal, whose dwelling-place was in holes and caves of the polluted earth beneath, so their spiritual nature was battling daily to obtain the mastery over their animal nature—so the new man, created in righteousness and true holiness within them,

was striving to conquer the old man, which was corrupt. And by the "Angel of His Presence," they declared Christ to be the Saviour of the whole world by His death on the cross, and they declared their personal dependence on His presence and blessing to enable them to be Christian in character and life.

Whether the Venetians were true to the declaration of Christian Faith and Life which they thus made by these stones inserted in the brick walls of their palaces, we cannot tell. I believe, however, that very generally they were, and that this explains to a large extent their greatness as individuals and as a nation. In any case, the stone declaration shows what they esteemed to be the true faith and the true life. And in this they were right. Only faith in Christ, and in Christ crucified, is saving faith. Only when a man realises that Christ loved him and that Christ died for him, does he become a new man in character and life, and is able to say, with the Apostle Paul, "and the life I now live in the flesh" (so different from the life I once lived), "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." And that life is a struggle. Indeed, the main difference between a Christian and a worldling is often just this: That the one is fighting against



C. Naya Photo

THE ANGEL OF HIS PRESENCE
(CA' POPOLIN, CAMPO S. MARGHERITA)

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temptation, the other is yielding to it; the one is battling against the stream, the other is going with it; the one is fighting the good fight of faith, the other is enjoying the pleasures of sin for a season:

(2) *Stones of Scripture.* — Moses, in his exhortation to the children of Israel to remember God's word, and to observe His commandments, says (Deut. vi. 9), "And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." This precept the Venetians used to observe, and hence we find passages of Scripture carved on the lintels and gateways of their palaces. As one, therefore, came up to a palace door, and knocked and waited, his eye could not but rest on some good and wholesome words, which were fitted to influence his mind and temper, and perhaps lead him to obey the further exhortation of Moses, "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

Many of these *Stones of Scripture* have disappeared, as have disappeared many *Stones of Christian Faith and Life*, but the following are amongst those still remaining.

One of the first palaces one sees on arriving at Venice is the Palazzo Vendramin, not far from the railway station on the Grand Canal. On the broad façade of the building are deeply cut in large letters the words, "*Non nobis Domine, non nobis*," being the opening words of Psalm cxv., "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake." On a house in Calle del Manganer, behind the Church of the SS. Apostoli, are the words above the door, "*Laudate Deo omnes gentes*," being taken from the first verse of Psalm cxvii., "O praise the Lord all ye nations, praise him all ye people," words quoted also by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, xv. 11, "Praise the Lord all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people." Another Scriptural stone above the door of a small house in Calle degli Eremiti, at S. Trovaso, bears the passage from Romans viii. 31, "*Si Deus pro nobis quis contra nos*," "If God be for us who can be against us?"; and another near it has these from 1 Chron. xvi. 28, and Psalm xcvi. 7, "*Afferte Domino gloriam et imperium*," "Give unto the Lord glory and strength." In Mr. Ruskin's day a house attached to Casa Barbarigo, on the Grand Canal, had the words "*Benedictus qui*

venit in nomine Domini," "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," Psalm cxviii. 26, Matt. xxi. 9. A very sad, but very appropriate, Scripture stone was inserted in the wall of the Rio di S. Pietro in 1821, twenty-five years after the fall of the Republic: "*Humiliatum est in laboribus cor eorum*," being part of verse 12th of Psalm cvii., "Therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and there was none to help." Sometimes the words express the sense of passages from the Scriptures, without being literal transcriptions. Thus, on a gateway in Calle Rota, at the *Accademia*, and on a house in Corte Rota, behind St. Mark's Church, there are inserted the words: "*Soli Deo laus, honor, et gloria*" (To God alone be praise, honour, and glory), which are taken in substance from the doxologies of Rev. iv. 11, and v. 12, 13. The same inscription is carved on the lintel of a palace door in the Piscina S. Zulian. Above the door of a house in Calle Lunga, S. Barnabà, are the words: "*Domine conserva nos in pace*," "O Lord, preserve us in peace." Over the gateway that gives entrance to the Palazzo Contarini Porta di Ferro, Salazzada S. Guistina, is an extremely beautiful and significant stone, with the words of our Lord

taken from St. Luke x. 5, "*Pax huic domui*," "Peace be to this house." This blessing is carved on a scroll which Christ Himself is represented unrolling and holding open across His breast. On either side of Him are the shields of the family, above His head is a *patera*, and over that, on the keystone of an encircling Byzantine scroll, is the Blessing Hand. This doorhead thus is both a *Stone of Scripture* and a *Stone of Christian Faith and Life*. "*Laus Deo*" is on a house in Calle di Mezzo, San Gregorio, and is also to be seen on other houses. A striking inscription, deeply carved in large letters, on the inner side of the parapet of the great Campanile of St. Mark's Church, which fell on the morning of July 14, 1902, and which was also inscribed on the bell of the Church of the Servites (Fra Paolo Sarpi's), was the following: "*Christus Rex venit in pace. Deus homo factus est*" (Christ, the King, came in peace. God was made man).

To the question, "What mean ye by these stones?" we answer, that they tell us that the Venetians prized the Scriptures, and knew their contents. Long before the age of printing, they wrote them in gold and colour, in imperishable materials—glass and stone mosaic *tesseræ* on the walls and domes of St. Mark's

PAX HUIC DOMUI—"PEACE TO THIS HOUSE"
(PALAZZO CONTARINI PORTA DI FERRO)

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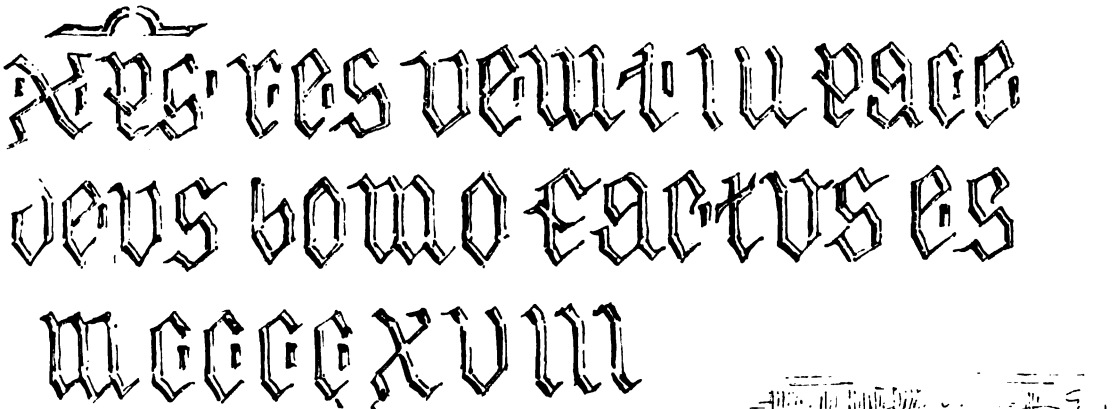
Church, making the church a great illuminated Bible. Then, when printing was introduced into Venice in 1469, the very first book printed, with the exception of one small religious tractate, was the Bible. Two years later, in 1471, two more complete editions of the Bible, in Italian, were published, and from that year to the close of the century, ten different houses printed Bibles, so that a fresh edition of it appeared almost every year. In the sixteenth century, sixty-three editions of the complete Bible were produced, in Italian, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Chaldee, and in all the languages spoken in Venice and in its colonies.

Mr. Ruskin tells us that when in the fifties he was staying with Mrs. M'Donald of Crossmount, in the Highlands of Scotland, he was strolling in the village one wet day, and was driven by the rain to take shelter in a cottage. Round the room, into which he was shown, were hung a print of the Crucifixion, and some of Old Testament subjects. He looked at the books on the table, well-used all of them, and found three Bibles, three prayer books, a treatise on *Practical Christianity*, another on *Seriousness in Religion*, and Baxter's *Saint's Rest*. Mr. Ruskin asked the cottager, if they read

no books but religious ones? The emphatic answer he received was, "No, sir; and I should be very sorry if there were any others in my house." Venice had many other books besides the Bible, but it was for many centuries her chief book, and it is interwoven with her noblest history. We read in the old chronicles that Carlo Zeno, the great Admiral of the Venetian Fleet in the fourteenth century, knew the Psalms by heart, and that the leaders of thought all studied the Bible. We also find that the Doges frequently made use of Scripture language in their public addresses.

Other nations besides the Venetians were accustomed to write passages of Scripture on the posts of their houses and on their gates, and some are still to be seen in the oldest parts of some English and Scottish towns (I have seen them on many houses in the old town of Edinburgh), but the custom has long since been given up. Perhaps that of itself matters little, provided we are careful to write them on the fleshy tablets of our hearts. And yet we might, perhaps, do well to act on Mr. Ruskin's suggestion, and inquire "whether that strong reluctance to utter a definite religious profession, which so many of us feel, and which, not very carefully examining into



ST. MARK'S CAMPANILE INSCRIPTION

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Mapu

its dim nature, we conclude to be modesty, or fear of hypocrisy, or other such form of amiableness, be not in very deed neither less nor more than infidelity; whether Peter's 'I know not the man' be not the sum and substance of all these misgivings and hesitations; and whether the shamefacedness which we attribute to sincerity and reverence, be not such shamefacedness as may at last put us among those of whom the Son of Man shall be ashamed." Let us lay to heart the words of Canon Liddon, "in which," Mr. Gladstone says, "he has described so far as man may describe it, the ineffable and unapproachable position held by the sacred volume." His words, which occur in a sermon entitled *The Worth of the Old Testament*, preached in St. Paul's Cathedral in 1889, are: "As we drift—along the swift relentless current of time—towards the end of life; as days, and weeks, and months, and years follow each other in breathless haste, and we reflect now and then for a moment that, at any rate for us, much of this earthly career has passed irrevocably; what are the interests, the thoughts, ay, the books which really command our attention? what do we read and leave unread? what time do we give to the Bible? No other book, let us be

sure of it, can equally avail to prepare us for that which lies before us; for the unknown anxieties and sorrows which are sooner or later the portion of most men and women; for the gradual approach of death; for the passage into the unseen world; for the sights and sounds which will then burst upon us; for the period, be it long or short, of waiting and preparation; for the Throne and the Face of the Eternal Judge. Looking back from that world, how shall we desire to have made the most of our best guide to it! how shall we grudge the hours we have wasted on any—be they thoughts, or books, or teachers—which only belong to the things of time!"

(3) *Stones of the Law.*—Another class of stones that exist in every quarter of the city, but more especially at the Rialto, and at the Doges' Palace—that is, at its Commercial and Judicial centres — is that of *Edict-Stones*, or *Stones of the Law.*

At the first-named centre, just across the Rialto Bridge, aproaching it from St. Mark's Square, stands one of the oldest churches in Venice, which was erected in the fifth century, San Giacomo di Rialto. Its north gable faces the bridge, and on it is carved in deep letters the famous inscription, as visible now as when

INSCRIPTIONS ON SAN GIACOMO DI RIALTO

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cut nearly fifteen hundred years ago, but which no traveller seems to have noticed before Mr. Ruskin in 1877, and which he quotes over and over again in his works, telling us that it was the pride of his life to discover it: "*Hoc circa templum sit jus mercantibus æquum, pondera nec vergant, nec sit conventio prava*" (Around this temple let the merchants' law (their principle of conduct) be just, let not their weights be false, nor their covenants unfaithful). The sanction for this precept we see inscribed on a simple cross set into the wall above it: "*Sit crux vera salus huic tua Christe loco*" (May Thy cross, O Christ, be the true safety of this place).

The front of the church forms one side of the Market Square of S. Giacomo, and opposite it, on the other side, is one of the stones from which were published the laws of the State. It is commonly called *Il Gobbo*, because of the crouching figure which supports the staircase by which it is reached. It bears the inscription: "*Lapis legibus Rep. edicendis.*"

Not less significant are the *Stones of the Law* existing in the Judicial centre of the city—that is, at the Doges' Palace. The chief gateway of the palace, the *Porta della Carta*, next St. Mark's Church, as its name imports,

and as its sculptures show, is in itself such a stone. Its name means the Door of the Papers, and it was so called because the secretaries sat here and wrote, and because all the more important decrees of the State were affixed to it. Indeed all such decrees bore a clause, saying, that they should be published here and at the Rialto. Its sculptures also show it to be a *Stone of the Law.* It is a Gothic doorway, and over the ogive of its arch is a figure of Justice, symbolising Venice herself. She is seated on two lions, with a drawn sword in her right hand, and a pair of balances in her left, below her is the Lion of St. Mark, on either side of which in niches are figures representing Love, Prudence, Temperance, and Fortitude. Close to the gateway is one of the chief angles of the palace, which is also a *Stone of the Law.* On the upper, or *loggia* part of it, is the Archangel Gabriel, whose name signifies, "the hero of God." He is regarded in the East as the angel of truth and justice, in whose hands will be placed the scales to weigh the actions of men at the last day. As announcing the birth of Christ, who was emphatically the Just and Righteous One, and who came to establish a kingdom of righteousness and reign in righteousness, Gabriel was regarded by

the Venetians as the angel of politics and of good government. On the lower part of the angle is the Judgment of Solomon. The King sits on his throne, and beside him are the two mothers, the child, and an executioner. This latter holds the child ready to divide it, whilst its mother grasps his arm to stay him in the act. Immediately underneath this is the great eight-sided capital of the angle column. On its first side is sculptured Justice, similar to that which is above the gateway, and on the other seven sides are eminent legislators and governors, namely: Aristotle, with his treatise on government; Moses, reading the book of the Law to the Israelites, who take an oath to observe it; Solon; Scipio Africanus; Numa Pompilius; Moses, receiving the tables of the Law; and Trajan, doing justice to the widow.

A few paces from this angle, at the corner of St. Mark's Church, stands a short, stout, porphyry pillar, called the *Pietra del Bando* (The Stone of Banishment). From the top of this column State edicts may have been published, but, as its name implies, it was the stone on which criminals were set to receive in public their sentences of punishment.

Lastly, throughout the city are to be seen, sometimes set upright in the pavement, at a

public thoroughfare, as at the Rialto, sometimes inserted into walls, as at Campo S. Zaccaria and Campo S. Sebastiano, stones inscribed with laws regulating the sale of bread, fish, meat, and other foods, or forbidding gambling with cards, playing with balls, swearing, and making unseemly noises. On a wall near Campo Santa Fosca is inscribed "*Bestemme non più, ma lodate Gesù*" (Swear no more, but praise Jesus).

Now let us ask, "What mean ye by these stones?" They tell us that the throne of Venice was established in righteousness.

The words on the old S. Giacomo Church, which Mr. Ruskin says "were the first Venice ever spake aloud," were an echo of those of Moses: "Thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have." And this honesty and equity in business matters characterised Venice, and dignified and ennobled her merchants. She brought goods from all shores to her capital, so that the Rialto became the market of the world to which merchants from every clime were attracted, knowing that her spices and stuffs were as free from adulteration as her gold sequins, and that the maxims of the temple, around which their business was transacted,

Alinari Photo

CAPITAL OF JUDGMENT ANGLE COLUMN

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were obeyed — *her merchants' laws were just, their weights were equal, and their covenants were faithful.* In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries Venetians were the great bankers of Christendom. Not only private individuals, but cities and states deposited their moneys and securities with them. In 1423 the Doge Tommaso Mocenigo, a prince of great wisdom and piety, addressing the Great Council in the interests of peace, reminded its members that their ambassadors and consuls were unanimous in their testimony that they were the only power who traded on all seas with all lands, who were the fountain of trade, and the victuallers of the world, and that they were welcome everywhere. And the promise annexed to the Mosaic injunction to have a perfect and just weight and measure, "that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee," was fulfilled in the history of Venice, for it was the longest-lived Republic the world has seen.

The sculptures on and at the entrance to the Palace of the Doges—the Tribunal of Justice—show us that the Venetians realised that "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God"; that their Prince, to whom the poorest citizen had ever a free

access, should "remove violence and spoil, and execute judgment and justice." And their Doges, as a class, realised this ideal. The words of Tommaso Mocenigo (1414–1423) fitted the lips of his predecessors and of his successors: "In all my actions I think first of justice, and then of the advantage of the State." We read in Venetian history, from the tenth century on to the sixteenth, of small duchies and princedoms around Venice—Padua, Treviso, Bologna, Piacenza, Verona, and of towns down both sides of the Adriatic, voluntarily putting themselves under the suzerainty of Venice, and it was often the only time of peace and prosperity and liberty and justice they knew. Mr. Ruskin quotes an old chronicler, Tentori, as saying that in the time of the Doge Francesco Dandolo (1329–1339) "there were sixty ambassadors from princes in Venice at the same time requesting the judgment of the Senate on matters of various concernment, so great was the fame of the uncorrupted justice of the Fathers." Venice was the only nation in Europe that restrained its soldiers from taking without payment goods from merchants and farmers whose territory was the seat of war, and which even compensated these classes, when the war was

over, for losses they had sustained. Even as late as 1796, when the government of Venice is generally supposed to have been corrupt, the Emperor Joseph II., after hearing cases debated in the Great Council and in the Council of Forty, said that of all judicial systems the Venetian appeared to him the purest, and the best fitted to secure the ends of justice.

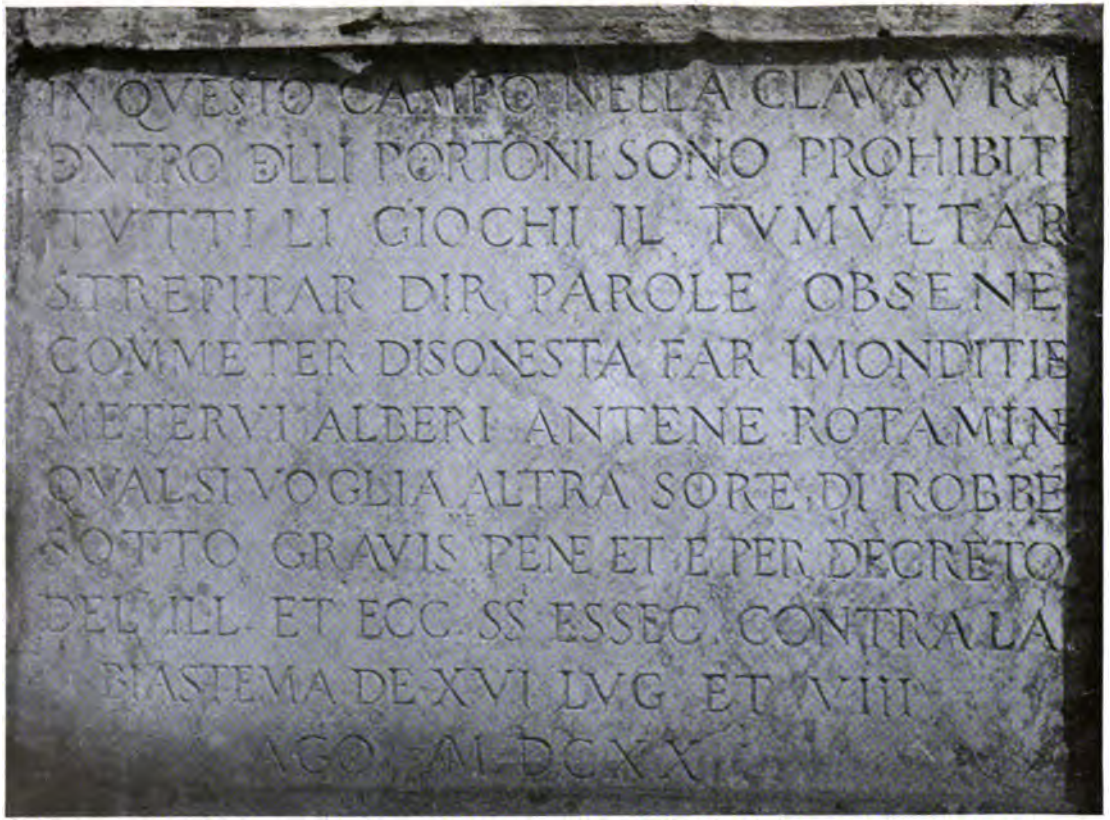
St. Mark's Church and the Palace of the Doges were intimately connected. As the two buildings touched each other and communicated with each other, so the civil influence of the one and the religious influence of the other flowed over from the one into the other, making the Palace a Temple, and the Temple the Council Chamber and Judgment Hall of the nation; and, as the Doge was Head of both, as he passed, by his state entrance, from the Church into the Palace, as he had often occasion to do, the following magnificent inscription, cut deep in the marble, shone brightly in letters of gold before his eyes:

"*Dilige justitiam, sua cunctis reddito jura;*
Pauper cum vidua, pupillus, et orphanus, O Dux!
Te sibi patronum sperant; pius omnibus esto;
Non timor, aut odium, vel amor, nec te trahat
aurum;

Ut flos casurus, Dux es, cineresque facturus,
Et velut acturus, post mortem sic habiturus."

(Love justice, render to all their rights,
Let the poor, with the widow, the minor, and the orphan, O Doge!
Hope to find in thee a defender; be kind to all;
Let not fear, nor hate, nor love, nor gold influence you;
As a flower, thou shalt fade, Doge thou art, and to ashes shalt thou turn;
And as thy actions, so after death, shall be thy condition.)

England is the successor of Venice in command of the seas, in commercial supremacy; and I may also confidently say that she is her successor in business honesty and in legal equity. Even our opponents witness to this, for in every foreign land the best guarantee of the genuineness and goodness of an article is to say that it is of English manufacture; and, abroad, no Englishman's bond is refused or his word doubted. It is universally believed that in the government there is no corruption, and that it is honourable in its dealings with all Powers. The condition of England's colonies the world over witness to the fact that her suzerainty, like that of her



STONE IN CAMPO S. ZACCARIA, FORBIDDING GAMBLING, SWEARING, &c.

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Mail

antitype, is a pledge of liberty and progress. Wherever England goes, she carries the blessings of righteousness and good government in her train.

If there is one truth more than another that runs through all Scripture, and which is reiterated by prophet and psalmist, by evangelist and apostle, it is that God is absolutely just and righteous. Justice, righteousness, is declared to be not only one of His essential attributes, it is declared to be a part of His very being. "Touching the Almighty," Job said, "he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice." "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne;" "Thy righteousness is like the great mountains, thy judgments are a great deep," said the Psalmist. And speaking by Isaiah, God said, "I the Lord speak righteousness, I declare things that are right." The whole Old Testament ritual of sacrifice and burnt-offering for sin proclaims God's righteousness, and in New Testament times, Christ, the visible image of God, was declared emphatically to be the Just and Righteous One, and His death was a sacrifice to Divine justice, for He died "that he (God) might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

Justice, righteousness, is a foundation-stone in Christian character, in the structure of society, and in all stable government. Without it all three sooner or later go to pieces. Personally, we know that by nature "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" in God's sight. Let us pray that God may give us grace "to break off our sins by righteousness"; that He may clothe us with the spotless robe of the Redeemer's righteousness, and enable us to be "trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified"; remembering that "the righteous Lord loveth righteousness, his countenance doth behold the upright," and that "the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever."

(4) *Stones of Infamy.*—Another class of stones very different from those we have already considered, and a class peculiar or nearly so, to Venice, is, *Stones of Infamy.*

In the long history of Venice there were but two serious attempts at revolution, one in 1310, promoted by Querini and Tiepolo, and the other in 1364, promoted by the Doge Marino Falier—a remarkable fact when one thinks of the frequently recurring feuds,

seditions, and insurrections that rent the other States of Italy. The aged conspirator, Doge Marino Falier, was beheaded. To him no *Stone of Infamy* was raised. But no stone could have covered with such eternal infamy his name, as does that simple black veil, bearing in white letters the words, "*Hic est locus Marini Faletro, decapitati pro criminibus*," that marks the space where his portrait should have hung amongst his illustrious predecessors and successors in the Hall of the Great Council, in the Palace of the Doges. Marco Querini fell in resisting the Ducal troops, and his palace, near the Rialto, was turned into the common shambles. Bajamonte Tiepolo, who had been much favoured and trusted by the people, was banished, and his palace at Sant' Agostino was razed to the ground, and, as the decree said, for his "perpetual shame and disgrace," *a Stone of Infamy* was erected on the site. The stone was in the form of a short thick column, which rested on a solidly laid pedestal, and bore the following inscription :—

"*De Baiamonte fo questo terreno*
E mo per suo iniquo trodimento
Posto in comun, et per l'altrui spavento
E per mostrar a tutti sempre seno."

This inscription cannot be rendered quite literally, but its meaning is—"This land belonged to Bajamonte, and for his iniquitous treason (this column) was erected, in view of the public, to be a terror to others, and a warning for ever to all."

The column remained in its original position for nearly five hundred years, till, in 1758, at the earnest request of the family, the Government allowed it to be taken away, and a flat inscribed stone put in its place, which remains to this day. It is a square block of marble inserted in the pavement at the south-east corner of Campo Sant' Agostin, and is inscribed "*Loc. Cal. Bai. The.* 1310." (The place of the Column of Baiamonti Tiepolo, 1310.)

As might be expected, the place where these *Stones of Infamy* are chiefly to be seen is at the old Tribunal of Justice, the Doges' Palace. Even there they are not very numerous, only some nine in all. They consist of flat tablets, built into the palace walls, in conspicuous positions, so that they catch the eye and can be easily read. Some are at that place of public resort, the great southern gateway, the *Porta della Grand Guardia* that fronts the open lagoon, according to the saying of Amos, "Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment

COLUMN OF INFAMY TO BAJAMONTE TIEPOLO

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in the gate;" others are on the walls under the quadrangle colonnade where officials walked, and others on the wall of the Piazzetta colonnade, which is a public thoroughfare. These stones are inscribed with the names and designations, with the crimes and punishments, of men who had held positions of honour and responsibility in the government and in the army, and who had proved themselves unfaithful to the trust reposed in them. One, for example, runs thus: "Gio. Giacomo Capro, accountant in the Treasury of the Magistracy of Corn, was banished by the High Council of Ten, on Sept. 6th, 1718, as an unfaithful minister, who was guilty of a serious appropriation of money from the said Treasury." On another stone we read: "1727, Nov. 12th, Pietro Bontio, late Controller in the Chamber of Armaments, was banished by the High Council of Ten, for grave and extensive thefts committed by him in that Chamber." A third stone tells a different tale. It is thus inscribed: "1657, Feb. 15th, Gioralmo Loredan and Giovanni Contarini were banished for abandoning the fortress of Tenedos, leaving it freely in the hands of the Turks, with arms and public munitions, to the notable damage of Christianity and of the Country."

Let us now ask the question, "What mean ye by these stones?"

In Venice there was a law, in force from earliest times till the decadence of the Republic, that no monument should be erected in face of the public to citizens who had distinguished themselves. Such monuments might be erected in churches or in the enclosed quadrangles of private palaces, but not in open public places. The reason for this was that all Venetian citizens were supposed to be filled with loyalty, with bravery, with whole-hearted devotion to the service of the State, and that therefore the erection of monuments to any one who had shown these qualities was a reflection upon others who were equally ready to show them should opportunity offer. The singling out of the few seemed to cast a stigma upon the many. On the other hand, cowardly, disloyal, unworthy citizens were supposed always to be few in number, and therefore it was easier and more to the purpose, when one such exposed himself, to erect a monument to him.

These *Stones of Infamy*, therefore, witness, directly, to the comparative rarity of disloyalty, of pusillanimity, and of dishonesty amongst the public servants and officers of the State; and they witness indirectly to the loyalty,

STONE OF INFAMY, DOGES' PALACE

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courageousness, integrity, and trustworthiness of these men as a whole. They witness also to the detestation with which crimes of treason, of appropriation of public funds, of cowardice, and of unfaithfulness to trust on the part of Government servants was regarded, and to the severity of the punishment inflicted on those found guilty of such deeds.

Happily, in England, amongst the servants of the Crown such deeds are as rare as they ever were in the Venetian Republic, although too frequently of late, in these days of hastening to be rich, the public are shocked by the fall of an individual, or the crash of a company, in which their trust had been misplaced.

But it becomes us all to remember that in a higher sense, in the sight of Heaven, we are all ministers, servants, stewards. "We are not our own." All we are, all we have, life itself, and all its opportunities and capabilities, is a trust—a trust carrying with it the gravest responsibility and accountability. Our Lord and Master has warned us in His parables against the two evils—of hoarding His goods and talents uselessly, and of squandering them prodigally. The Apostle Paul says, "It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful," and, speaking of himself, he says,

that he had "obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful." Let us pray for similar mercy, remembering that no *Stones of Infamy* may be raised to us here, yet sin unforgiven does not go unpunished. As Canon Liddon has said in his book, *Some Elements of Religion:* "The sternest things that have ever been said as regards sin's prospects in another world first passed the tenderest lips that ever proclaimed God's love to man."

(5) *White Stones.*—In *The Palace* (p. 22) I have spoken of stones of beauty, "glistering stones, and of divers colours," and so passing over these, and some others I might mention, I come to speak lastly of *White Stones.*

In many of the smaller houses of Venice, there is set conspicuously in an angle of the wall, generally at the height of ten or twelve feet from the ground, so that the eye naturally rests upon it, a *White Stone.* It shines clean and bright amongst the too frequently crumbling bricks. Age and exposure to the weather, that seem to darken and blacken its surroundings, only serve to bleach and whiten it, and to make it stand out more and more in relief.

"What mean ye by these stones?" They generally serve a double purpose, that of ornament and that of use—of beauty and

of utility. They decorate the building by relieving to the eye its uniformly red brick colour, and they give compactness and solidity to the angles in which they are set. They are decorative stones, being generally of white Istrian marble; and they are binding stones, holding the more fragile bricks in place.

But for us they have a higher meaning, a spiritual meaning. They suggest those white stones of which we read in the Book of the Revelation of St. John, which our Lord promises to give to those who are conquerors in the battle of life, to those who overcome by His blood—the blood of the Lamb. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."

Let us not be content to avoid having *Stones of Infamy* raised to us, but let us covet to possess the *White Stone*—this precious stone, clean and bright, this pledge of Christ's love and favour, this token of Divine honour and glory, this stone of our credentials as Christians, as belonging to Christ and as possessing Christ, "my beloved is mine and I am his," this stone of secret, personal attachment and love. It is said to have a name, "a new

name," "written," cut, engraved upon it, "which no man knoweth saving he which receiveth it." We read in the Old Testament Scriptures of God changing the names of patriarchs and prophets when they entered upon a new and near and personal relationship with Himself; and we read in the New Testament of our Lord bestowing new names on those who became new creatures in Him. The new name engraved on the white stone is thus a further pledge and token of a new and intimate, of a personal and secret, relationship existing between the receiver and the Bestower, between the believer and Christ. "Thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name," said Isaiah to God's children in his day; and David gives expression to the same thought in the words, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant."

We have thus endeavoured to understand the meaning of those different classes of memorial stones set up in Venice—*Stones of Christian Faith and Life*, *Stones of Scripture*, *Stones of the Law*, *Stones of Infamy*, and *White Stones*. And now to gather up into a single sentence their united meaning and testimony, I may say that they teach us, with

emphasis and clearness and power, the lesson that it was not, as some say, by irreligion and injustice, by tyranny and cruelty, by worldliness and pleasure-seeking, that the Venetians became wealthy and powerful as individuals, and that their Republic became strong and progressive and enduring; but it was by the exercise of virtues the very opposite of these vices. The united testimony of these stones witnesses to the existence in the hearts of the people of a real, vital and intelligent, because scriptural, religious faith, which was the source and spring of their conduct, and which led them onward from strength to strength, from victory to victory, to that superlative greatness which raised them high above all contemporary peoples and nations. And, than that vital, active, practical, and personal Christian faith, there is no other influence, no other power, which can insure and increase and perpetuate personal and national prosperity and greatness. It becomes us to remember this fact, both as individuals and as a nation, lest, forgetting it, as Venice did at last, we "may be led," to quote the words used by Mr. Ruskin in the very first sentence he ever penned about the Republic, "through prouder eminence to less pitied destruction."

V

LIVING WATER

"The glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams."—ISAIAH xxxiii. 21.

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CHRIST AND THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA

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Mail

V

LIVING WATER

"*If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.*" —JOHN iv. 10.

A FEATURE of Venice that usually strikes and interests travellers is its wells. In the centre of almost every *campo* (once, as the word indicates, a green field, now a paved square), in front of almost every church, in every courtyard, in every cloister, in the internal quadrangular space open to the sky of every palace (corresponding with the ancient *peristylium* and *impluvium*), in gardens, and not unfrequently inside dwelling-houses themselves, there are wells. These are marked by well-heads, massive hollow blocks of marble, the oldest of which—the Byzantine—are cylindrical in form; the others — the Gothic — resemble capitals, of which the well is the column or shaft. Almost all of them are richly sculptured,

the Byzantine ones with religious symbolism—crosses, palm trees, birds, and animals; the Gothic with natural and grotesque figures and objects. And as we see these wells surrounded on a sunny afternoon by picturesque groups of gossiping Venetian women, with their bright-coloured dresses and shining copper vessels, come to draw water, we cannot but think (even though we are in a city) of Eastern wells and Eastern scenes, such as those associated in Old Testament Scripture with Rebekah and Isaac, with Jacob and Rachel, with Moses and the daughters of the priest of Midian; and of the ever memorable scene, from which my text is taken, of our Lord's discourse with the woman of Samaria by the old historic well of Sychar—a well cut deep in the rock, and easily identified at the present time.

But more interesting than the wells of Venice to travellers who visit this city is its water supply, because whilst the former have but a sentimental interest, the latter has a practical one. Is the water drawn from these wells good? Is it wholesome? Where does it come from? Is it safe to drink the water offered us in the hotels? May we drink of it freely? These are some of the questions often asked by the traveller, and very important questions they

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GOTHIC WELL-HEAD IN CLOISTERS OF SAN GREGORIO

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are; for, as we all know, water is very liable to contamination, and the drinking or refusal to drink of it may be a matter of health or sickness, of life or death, at any time, for any of us.

There are other wells than those we see and admire in Venice, and another kind of water in which we should be interested than that offered to us here to drink, for there is a thirst of the soul as well as a thirst of the body. Our spirits, if in a normal state, thirst, with an appetite, with a longing, as real and as imperious as that of the body, and which, if unsatisfied, is followed by far more sad and disastrous results. The thirst of the body is the sign and proof that the body wants water for its health and life, and the thirst of the soul bears similar testimony to its needs. The body may die of physical thirst, and the soul may die of spiritual thirst.

But we are too apt at all times to forget the latter half of this truth, and especially when we are travelling about amongst the excitement and novelty of "fresh fields and pastures new," and thus, when in Venice and in other foreign cities, travellers sometimes are very anxious as to obtaining good drinking water, whilst they are quite thoughtless and indifferent about obtaining that living water required by their souls.

Such indifference is not only blameworthy, but foolish. It is rebuked by our Lord when He tells us to "Take no thought (anxiety), saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink?"; it is rebuked by our Lord in the words of my text, spoken to the woman at the well of Sychar—"If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." It is foolish to be concerned about water to slake the body's thirst, whilst unconcerned about that better water that slakes the thirst of the soul. It is foolish to be anxious to satisfy the needs of the perishable body, whilst careless about satisfying those of the imperishable soul, that will go on living when our bodies have crumbled into dust.

And now let me say something about the water supply of Venice. When I first knew this city, in 1882, it was dependent for its drinking water mainly on the many wells of which I have been speaking. Some few of them are natural springs, others (some nine in number, which have lately been increased to twenty-one) are artesian, but the bulk of them are simply shafts for the collection of rain water that percolates into them through beds

GOSSIPING VENETIAN WOMEN DRAWING WATER

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Non-Circulating

of sand and gravel. This supply was supplemented by water brought in barges from the Brénta Canal (*Seriola Veneta*) at Fusina, on the mainland. Sometimes it was brought in bulk, the barge becoming a huge water-tank, but oftener it came in large open-mouthed tubs. Mr. Ruskin, writing half a century ago, incidentally mentions this mode of bringing water to Venice. Describing an excursion to Murano, he says—"We push our way on, between large barges laden with fresh water from Fusina, in round white tubs, seven feet across." This barge water was then transferred to cisterns in hotels and private houses. But this supply of water for the requirements of Venice was not satisfactory. The imported water was apt to become stale, and the well water brackish and impure.

Accordingly, in 1884, an attempt was made to improve matters. The water was drawn from the same mainland source, but large reservoirs and filtration works were constructed at Moranzani, a little way inland from Fusina, from which the water was brought to Venice in pipes laid on the bed of the lagoon. On reaching Venice it was run, in the first instance, into a huge reservoir at Sant' Andrea, near the railway station, from which, by means of steam

power, it was driven into pipes which distributed it throughout the city.

But soon it was felt that even yet there was a radical defect in the Venice water supply, for the water itself, notwithstanding its filtration and coming to Venice in pipes, being drawn from a canal, could not be perfectly good. A new source of water was therefore sought. Now geologists had before this pointed out that the formation of the country around Venice, formed, as it is, of deposits from the great chain of Dolomite mountains that bounds it to the north, warranted them in believing that at no great distance below the surface, what are called water-bearing strata of sand would be found. Accordingly, search was made, and at a place called Sant' Ambrogio, about twelve miles west from Mestre, the geological theory was confirmed. A number of natural springs were discovered, and by boring to the small depth of some forty feet, the water-bearing sand strata was reached. In fact, a river of water flowing on a bed of sand and gravel, with a layer of clay at some distance above it and another below it, was struck. The dozen or so of natural springs were supplemented by three hundred artesian wells, and an abundant and never-failing supply

of the purest drinking water, free from every trace of organic matter, was obtained. In 1892 this water was brought to Venice instead of the other, and it is this which is now distributed throughout the city. Those of the public wells in the Campos, from which the poor people draw their water, that were formerly fed by filtered rain and surface water, are now fed by this pure spring water. They have now become simply cisterns into which a supply of this water is daily run. Thus the water supply of Venice is perfect and abundant, adequate to meet the needs of all, and we may slake our thirst with it freely at any of its wells.

And now let us think of that other kind of water of which we need to drink in order to satisfy the needs of our souls. It is that of which our Saviour spoke to the woman of Samaria, in distinction from, and in contrast to, the water of Jacob's Well. It is called "living water." Sometimes this term is applied to natural waters, as in Gen. xxvi. 19, where we read that "Isaac's servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing (in the Hebrew *living*) water," and in Lev. xiv. 5, we read, in regard to the cleansing of leprosy, that the priest shall command to kill

a clean bird over running (again in the Hebrew *living*) water," and Solomon speaks of "a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon." Yes, earthly waters springing up in the green sward, or gushing from the clefts of the rock, are figuratively called living waters, but the really living water is this spiritual water, which, like that of Ezekiel's vision, "makes everything to live whither the waters come." It is not only a refreshment of life, it is endowed with life, possessed with life, and so it communicates life. It gives spiritual life. It refreshes the thirsty soul; but it does more, it quickens to new life the soul dead in trespasses and sins. It cleanses from the leprous stain of sin, it cures the leprous disease of sin. It makes the parched, barren, lifeless soul to become "like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not."

And where is this water to be found? It is found in Christ. "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." "With Christ is the fountain of life."

It is Christ that our souls need for the quenching of their thirst. It is He who can meet and

BYZANTINE WELL, PALAZZO MOCENIGO

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satisfy our deepest wants and longings. Christ in the fulness of His person divine and human, Christ in the efficacy of His atoning death.

I know that in Isaiah we read of "wells of salvation," out of which God's people "draw water with joy"; and in Zechariah we read, "And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem, half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be;" and often in sculpture, painting, and mosaic, one sees the four rivers of Paradise, of the Old Testament dispensation, transfigured and transformed for us, in New Testament times, to the four streams of the Gospel. But just as in Venice there are hundreds of wells, but all are supplied by the same water, from the same source, so all these waters have their common source in Christ. They all come from Him, like the waters of Ezekiel's vision, that issued forth from under the threshold of His temple. It is Christ, and Christ alone, who is the Fountain of living waters, the Fountain that comes "forth from the house of the Lord" for the slaking of the soul's thirst.

We may recall some Old Testament words that speak of the soul's thirst and its satisfaction. These, for example, of Ps. xlii. 1, 2: "As

the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." Or these of Ps. lxiii. 1, "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is." Yes, our souls thirst for God, because, as Augustine long ago said, God Himself has implanted in us this thirst. "*Tu nos fecisti ad Te, Domine, et inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in Te.*" (Thou, O Lord, hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless, till it rest in Thee.)

But, whilst this is so, we must remember that God the Father can only be known, can only be apprehended, can only be approached, through Christ. Isaiah, in the sixth chapter of his book, tells us of a vision that he had of God: "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord." But what does the Apostle John say concerning this very vision? "These things said Isaiah, when he saw Christ's glory and spake of him." And we read of Moses striking the rock Horeb in the Wilderness of Sin, when waters gushed out and flowed to the camp of the thirsty Israelites at Rephidim. "God pouring water upon him that was thirsty, and floods upon the dry

ground," causing "waters to break out in the wilderness, and streams in the desert." But the Apostle Paul, commenting on this, says: "They did all drink the same spiritual drink, for they drank of the rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ."

Thus our souls thirst for God, but Christ "is the image of the invisible God." He is "God manifest in the flesh," "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." To the demand of Thomas, "Lord, show us the Father," Jesus answered, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Therefore it is that our Saviour claims to be the sole way back to God: "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." Therefore it is that Jesus Christ is the Water of Life, that slakes our soul's thirst; therefore it is that He alone is this, that He alone bestows the "living water."

And He is able and willing to bestow this water upon all. There is in Him an abundant supply, sufficient to meet the needs of all. No one can go to this fountain, and find the water either frostbound by winter's cold, or dried up by summer's heat.

We read, in John vii. 37, that, at the Feast of Tabernacles, "in the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying,

If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." "If any man thirst," no matter who he may be, rich or poor, learned or ignorant, white or black, "let him come unto me, and drink." This living water, fitted and alone fitted to quench that spiritual thirst felt by every one, is found in Him in measureless abundance, more than adequate to meet the needs of all. The waters may fail from the sea, and the flood decay and dry up, and "cause the drink of the thirsty to fail," but Christ says to each coming to Him: "I will satisfy thy soul in drought, and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not."

"Whose waters fail not!" What does our Saviour say further of the "living water" which He thus freely offers to all? "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." He who drinks of it shall become, as it were, himself a springing well. Therefore whosoever drinketh of the water of earth "shall thirst again," but "whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." He shall thirst for no other water than that which Jesus gives him, and he shall have abundance of it always. Therefore he can never suffer

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ORNATE GOTHIC WELL-HEAD IN COURTYARD OF A PALACE

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Mali

thirst again. His thirst is relieved not temporarily, but for ever. It may be said not to be relieved at all, but to be cured; the painful appetite of an unsatisfied heart is not assuaged only, it is taken away. The words of Isaiah are fulfilled in believers in Jesus. "They shall not hunger nor thirst . . . for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them." And Jesus said unto them, "He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst."

There is something peculiarly appropriate and suggestive in our Lord's speaking of Himself, and of the blessings He bestows upon us, under the figure of "living water." For water plays a part in the creation, sustenance, and growth of physical life, and in the discharge of life's functions, and in the performance of life's work, that we oftentimes fail to realise. For what is water? I do not ask what it is in its essential nature and constituent parts, but what it is in its visible properties and place and action in the economy of nature? Physiologists tell us that it lies at the base of all life; that where there is no water

there is no life. Before life can be generated, either in the vegetable or animal kingdom, there must be water. If water is not present, its production is an impossibility. There are great scientific truths underlying such statements as those in the account given us of the Creation in the first chapter of Genesis: "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters;" "And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven."

Necessary for the production of life, water is also necessary for its continuance. Every particle of living matter contains water in itself. Life cannot be sustained without it. If water is entirely withdrawn from it, it dies. A handful of corn seed that may have lain long on the barn floor looks parched and dry enough, yet the germ inside every seed is to a certain extent moist, if it is alive. And that the germ-life in seeds remains alive for years and centuries is due to the construction of their outer envelopes, of their capsules, which are marvellously adapted to preserve the moisture within them from evaporation.

Water, too, is necessary for the growth of life. No living thing can expand, and increase,

and develop without water. If water is not supplied in adequate quantities life is hindered, and growth is retarded or checked altogether. The very rapidity of the growth of life is often dependent on the quantity of water supplied. Hence living organisms consist largely of water. Animalcula or protozoa-life is water-life. We are told that when the water, in a drop of which millions of these creatures live, is evaporated, there is hardly any residuum of solid matter left behind. Four-fifths of the substance of vegetables is water, and even of the human organism water is the main constituent.

Again, no food can nourish life that is not first dissolved in water. Nutriment must be reduced to a liquid state by the action of water before it can be taken up and assimilated by the system. Hence all nutrient matter that we take is distributed through the system in solution. Nor can living power be exercised without the presence of water. The brain matter, the muscles, the fibres, the nerves in our bodies that are concerned in thinking, working, walking, speaking, cannot perform their functions without the aid of water. And if sufficient water is not present, movement and action are hampered and hindered.

The appetite of thirst, then, is only nature's imperious call for water, essential for the putting forth of life's activities, for life's growth, for life's very existence.

And in like manner Christ lies at the base of all spiritual life.

He is essential to the creation of spiritual life. Where Christ is not, there may be much moral beauty, but there is no spiritual life. By nature "we are dead in trespasses and sins," and it is Christ who brings our dead souls to life. "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

It is Christ, likewise, that sustains life in us. It is only in union with Him that we can live. "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." It is only in union with Him we can increase and grow, grow "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ"; "grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."

And all the rich provision that God has made for our spiritual nourishment only profits us when we receive it sphered in Christ. The study of nature, of providence, of history, of the Bible, only spiritually nourishes those who

GOTHIC WELL AT MURANO

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regard these things from a Christian standpoint. "Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God doth man live," but to obtain the life-sustaining good of that word we must see Christ in it.

Again, only in union with Him can our spiritual faculties be profitably exercised, only in union with Him can we do spiritual work: "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me. . . . He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me ye can do nothing." "The fruits of righteousness" which we are called upon to bring forth, are "by Jesus Christ." "The life which I now live in the flesh," says the Apostle Paul, who "laboured more abundantly than they all," "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

It has been nobly said, "There is no wealth but life;" and blessed be God, the very mission of Christ is to give, and sustain, and amplify this wealth: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

What water is in the physical world, that

Christ is in the spiritual; and our spiritual thirst is only the call of our higher nature for Christ, in order to its life and growth, and the putting forth of its powers in work.

In closing, let us ask ourselves what is our attitude towards Christ, how do we regard this "living water"? The elaborately and beautifully carved well-heads of Venice show the value the old Venetians set on the obtaining and possession of good drinking water. They did not regard water as a common thing. Living in their sea-girt island homes they realised its preciousness. Do we realise in like manner the preciousness of the "living water" which Christ gives; counting it to be, as life itself is, above all money and all price.

And are we showing our realisation of its preciousness, not only by building lofty and ornate churches and cathedrals, not only by rites and ceremonies and oft-repeated sacraments, which are at best but as vessels and channels for its distribution, but by drinking of the pure water of life, each for himself and herself; by coming to Christ Himself for the satisfaction of all our spiritual wants and longings?

There is a tendency to go elsewhere for the assuaging of our spiritual thirst. There is a

tendency to rest in these very temples and ceremonies to which I have referred, which is really to put the vessel in the place of the water. Hence the warning the Archbishop of York has given: "We ought to return," he said, "to the simplicity of the ministry of the early Christian Church." And, as in the far back days of Jeremiah, so in every age, and so at the present time, there are those who go to wrong sources altogether, seeking at the fountains of learning, or pleasure, or wealth, or worldly ambition, to satisfy the longings of their immortal spirits. There is still cause for the Divine lamentation uttered by the lips of the prophet: "My people have committed two evils, they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."

In the economy of nature we know that nothing can take the place of water. God has given us that one element for the quenching of thirst. There are many and varied drinks which we may take. Our tables too often bear witness to the multiplicity of wines and waters that are manufactured at the present day. But we ought to remember that it is only the water that these may happen to contain that meets and slakes the appetite of

thirst. Would it not, then, be better for us all—it would be much better, I am sure, in many cases—to pass by these artificial drinks, and to content ourselves with the indispensable gift of heaven, pure, clear, sparkling, unadulterated water. And in like manner we ought to remember that God has given us in the spiritual world one element alone for the quenching of our thirst, the "living water" to be found in Christ. "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." Passing by, then, all intermediaries of every class and kind, we should come to Him, directly and personally, to drink unadulterated the pure water of life. And if we are really spiritually thirsty this we will do; just as when a man is really suffering from the appetite of thirst, when his lips and throat are dry and parched, when he is, as we say, "consumed with thirst," then he wants water, nothing else but water. Oh, how grateful is "cold water to a thirsty soul!" Yes, when a man realises himself to be a sinner in God's sight, when he feels the burden of his sins—a burden too heavy for him to bear—when, like the Philippian jailer he cries out in an agony of mind, "What must I do to be

GOTHIC WELL IN A CAMPO

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saved?", then he wants Christ, then he wants "living water," then he is content to know nothing but "Jesus Christ, and him crucified." Blessed are they who sooner or later are in that condition, "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

"They shall be filled." Christ meets all seeking souls with this great gift. "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." None need perish from spiritual thirst. As Venice is dotted over with wells, all containing the same pure drinking water, so Christ has surrounded us with means of grace, has opened for us on every hand fountains from which flows His "living water." We are invited to come and drink, and live. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters!" "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring," and "thou shalt be like a well-watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not."

Drinking of Christ, the "living water," through the channels of earth—for we have

this treasure now in earthen vessels—we shall hereafter drink of Christ in the New Jerusalem, where "The glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams," where flows the "pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." And the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed us, and shall lead us unto living fountains of waters.

"O Christ, He is the fountain,
The deep sweet well of love;
The streams on earth I've tasted,
More deep I'll drink above;
There to an ocean fulness,
His mercy doth expand;
And glory—glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land."

"The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

VI

TEMPLES OF GOD

"Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH . . . and he shall build the temple of the Lord: even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory."

—ZECH. vi. 12, 13.

TEMPLE OF ST. MARK

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VI

TEMPLES OF GOD

"*Ye are the temple of God.*"—1 Cor. iii. 16.

"*Ye are the temple of the living God.*"
—2 Cor. vi. 16.

In these words the Apostle Paul figuratively calls Christians *Temples of God*, *Temples of the Living God.* Sometimes this image is used by him of Christians collectively — of the Church as a whole. As, for example, when he says (Eph. ii. 20, 21), "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." And in like manner the Apostle Peter says (1 Pet. ii. 4, 5), "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious. Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house."

But, as Christianity deals with us not only

collectively, but also, and very specially, as individuals; as it has disclosed to the world, as nothing else has done, the unspeakable value and sacredness and dignity of each separate life, the figure is also used of individual Christians, and this is the case in my texts. St. Paul, addressing his Corinthian converts, and addressing us as separate individuals, says, "Ye are the temple of God." "Ye are the temple of the living God."

The figure here used was, on the lips of the Apostle, one of momentous import. I do not know that he, as a Jew, could have used a more solemn, a more significant symbolism, or one more in harmony with that exalted view of the gift of life and of the individual value of every soul, of which I have just spoken. For, amongst every people, the word used, equivalent to that of temple, means a house erected for their god. And it was so amongst the Jews; only, with this tremendous difference, that whilst in many lands the temples were those of false gods, of dumb, dead idols, consisting of so much wood or stone, and so much carving and colouring, that in Jerusalem was the Temple of the Living God. "For all the gods of the nations are idols." But that temple has long since disappeared. Centuries

have gone by since our Saviour's words concerning it were fulfilled, "Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

To understand the metaphor, however, we need not recall descriptions of the Jewish temple; it will be sufficient to think of any Christian temple familiar to us. But, as we are here in Venice, perhaps we shall be best helped if we think of the Church of St. Mark, that glorious world-famed temple near which we are now met, which presents not a few points analogous to those of the first temple at Jerusalem. For St. Mark's, like Solomon's temple, was built by kings—one preparing for its construction, and another building it. In 829 the Doge Giustiniano Partecipazio, like King David, conceived the idea of building an house, "exceeding magnifical, of fame and of glory throughout all countries," and he "made provision" for it before his death, preparing materials abundantly, timber, precious marbles, and gold; and his successor Giovanni Partecipazio, like King Solomon, built the house with promptitude and energy. This temple too, like that, owned no allegiance to any ecclesiastical authority, but was ruled, in

the name of God and the people, by its Prince, whose house—the Ducal Palace—like King Solomon's, touched the sacred walls. Into this, as into that, the people brought their trophies of victory, and they "hanged their shields upon its walls round about." This temple, like that, became the centre of the nation's life, civil as well as religious. It was the Venetians' Church and their Senate-house, their Bible and their Charter—the Altar and the Throne of Venice. And as such they loved it, and prized it above all else, and were never weary of bringing into it, for its preservation, its enlargement, and its enrichment, the best of their thought, the best of their wealth, and the best of their labour.

Let us now briefly think of some points of analogy that ought to hold between such a temple and ourselves as Christians.

(1) *A Temple is not an ordinary building.*—A temple is not an ordinary building. It is a kind of building that stands by itself. Its architecture is different from that of other buildings. It is at a glance distinguishable from a dwelling-house, from a palace, from a warehouse, from a shop, from a mercantile exchange. It is not a building associated, like other buildings, with the things of earth and

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UNION OF THE DOGE'S PALACE AND CHAPEL

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time. It is associated with spiritual things. It is a holy building. As St. Paul says (1 Cor. iii. 17), "The temple of God is holy." Most temples are consecrated. But whether this is done or not, a certain sanctity or sacredness pertains to them. Their furniture and vessels are different from those of other buildings. When they are used for common purposes, as many temples now are in Italy, they are said to be secularised. An act of spoliation or violation committed in a temple is called sacrilege. The very word "profane" means literally (*pro fanum*) "before the temple," "outside the temple," hence not separated, not sacred, not consecrated, but unhallowed and common. So Esau is said to have been a "profane" person, and so we speak of "profane history." One of the charges made by the Jews against St. Paul, was (Acts xxiv. 6), that he went about "to profane the temple"; and one of the charges made against our Saviour was, that He said He could destroy the temple and raise it up in three days.

A temple, then, is no ordinary building. And, as Christians, we ought not to be ordinary people. St. Peter writing to the strangers scattered abroad, says (1 Peter ii. 9), "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an

holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." John Bunyan represents Christian and Faithful at Vanity Fair as differing from those around them in three particulars—they were clothed with such raiment as was diverse from the raiment of any that traded in the fair, their speech was different—they spake the language of Canaan, and they set very light by all the wares that were displayed at the fair. Christians should be in the world, and yet not of it. They are called to be saints; that is, not necessarily sinless ones (though they have an idea of sanctity altogether their own, and the work of sanctification is carried on in them), but separated; not faultless ones, but consecrated. "The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

Are we in this sense temples? Are we different from others? Are we different from what we would be if we were not Christians? Are we different from what we were before we became Christians? A real Christian is a man who is separated from the worldling by a chasm as wide as that which separates light from darkness, life from death. That is a hard thing to say, but it is true. If we are

not different from those "who have their portion in this life," then we are not temples. We may be amiable and useful for all that—halls of learning, schools of art, founts of wisdom, marts of industry, centres of commerce, happy dwelling-houses, but we are not temples. But it is temples that we are expected to be. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you."

(2) *A Temple is God's house.*—As our text tells us, a temple is a building that stands in a special relation to God. It is God's house, the place where God hath chosen to put His name. When King Solomon consecrated the temple he said (1 Kings viii. 27): "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?" Solomon thus knew that his temple never could contain the Deity. In his consecration prayer, after every petition, he said, "Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place, and when thou hearest, forgive." At the same time we read that God's visible glory filled the house, and God said, "I have hallowed this house which thou hast built, to put

my name there for ever, and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually." God put His name there. A temple is called by His name. There is a sense of God's hallowing presence in it. It leads us to think of God, of His existence, personality, word, and will, and works. It helps us with the eye of faith to see Him who is invisible. Its very structure lends itself to religious thought and aspiration. Its peaks and points and pinnacles, its towers and turrets, rising into the pure air and tranquil light of heaven, all direct the thoughts upward to God's dwelling-place above. Its furniture, its equipment, its pictures, its mural decorations in mosaic or in fresco, its music and services, all recall the presence of the Deity. The temple is the "House of God." Like Solomon's, like Ezra's, like St. Mark's, temples are built "unto the Lord."

It is possible for a building to be a temple and yet not to be God's house. Our Lord found the temple in Jerusalem in His day "a house of merchandise" and "a den of thieves"; and twice, once at the beginning of His ministry, and once at its close, He cleansed it, driving outside its precincts both them that bought and them that sold. In the seventeenth century three old churches in Venice

CHURCH OF SAN MOISÈ, AN "IMPIOUS BUILDING"

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were rebuilt, each of them receiving a very ornate sculptured façade. These churches are Santa Maria Formosa, San Moisè, and Santa Maria Zobenigo—all in the neighbourhood of St. Mark's Square. At first, struck only by their wealth of sculpture, travellers are apt to admire these churches. But, as Mr. Ruskin points out, when one looks closely at them, he discovers that they are "entirely destitute of every religious symbol, sculpture, or inscription." They are really monuments to the glory of those Venetian families—the Capello, the Fini, and the Barbaro—by whose generosity they were rebuilt. It is the statues of members of these families that are set, like presiding deities, over their central doors and in other conspicuous parts of the buildings; it is their exploits that the sculptures proclaim; it is their names that those churches bear. Ostensibly raised for God's glory, they were really raised for man's vanity. Therefore Mr. Ruskin calls them "impious buildings . . . manifestations of insolent atheism." As temples of God, as temples of the living God, let us endeavour to keep our heart free from evil, ruthlessly expelling every intruder who may dare to cross its threshold to usurp His place. For "what concord hath Christ with

Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" (2 Cor. vi. 15, 16).

It is a significant thing that in the original language of our New Testament two Greek words are used for temple. Their meanings are quite distinct, though this does not appear in our translation, where both are simply translated temple. The one word is ἱερόν (hieron), which means sacred, from which we have our words hierarchy (a body of sacred persons), hieroglyphics, hierography (sacred writings), but which does not involve the idea of any moral quality. Ἱερόν (hieron) only expresses an external relation to God. Ἱερεύς (hiereus) is a priest, a man set apart for a sacred purpose, but the word does not imply the idea that he is a holy person. It says nothing about character. It describes him officially, not personally. The word ἱερόν (hieron) is applied to the external buildings of the temple, the outer courts.

The other word used in the New Testament and translated temple is ναός (naos), which has a very different meaning. It implies a moral quality. It involves the notion of holiness. Applied to the temple it signifies the dwelling-place of the Deity, the proper habitation of

God, the Holy of Holies, where was God's manifested presence. And that is the word used in my texts. Applied thus figuratively to us it means that we are the dwelling-places of God, that God hath hallowed us and called us by His name. "Know ye not that ye are the temple (*ναός*) of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. iii. 16). "Ye are the temple (*ναός*) of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (2 Cor. vi. 16). "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John xiv. 23). Created in God's image at first, an image marred by sin, we are re-created in it by Christ Jesus. The lineaments of the divine image are again stamped upon us. Every regenerated, every converted soul is a temple of the divine presence. "Ye are the temple (*ναός*) of God," "Ye are the temple (*ναός*) of the living God."

(3) *In the Temple, God's house, man communes with God.*—When Christians gather together in a temple it is, as defined in the Book of Common Prayer, "to render thanks for the great benefits we have received at His

hands, to set forth His most worthy praise, to hear His most holy Word, and to ask those things which are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul." In the temple, God's house, God communes with us, and we with Him. We have real and effective communion with God in praise and prayer; and God communes with us in answering our prayers, in accepting our praises, and in making known His character and His will in His most holy Word, read and preached. In the Jewish temple God's Word was read, expounded, and enforced. It was read clearly, and the people were made to understand the sense. In the temples of England, and in those of other Protestant lands, this is also done. In those of most Roman Catholic lands this is not done. But little of God's Word is read, and that little is in a language which the people do not understand, and there is little exposition given of it in the vernacular of the people. But in St. Mark's Church, up to the fall of the Republic, the teaching of God's Word formed a principal part of the service, and even now the lack of it is partly compensated for by the fact that the church is itself an open Bible—a book to read as well as a place to worship in. In the

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ST. MARK'S CHURCH—"AN OPEN BIBLE"

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atrium there are in mosaic the foundation truths of the Old Testament, from the Creation to the formation of the Children of Israel as a nation under Moses; and in the church itself there are exhibited the main facts in our Lord's life, from His birth to His ascension. And this teaching of the walls and domes addresses the eye, through which organ the mind is most easily reached, most enduringly affected—"eyes first, hands next, ears last"—and the teaching is also conveyed in a language that is intelligible to all, that can be understood by all—the language of universal sign and symbol. In a temple, then, man communes with God, and God with man.

As being temples, we ought, each of us, to be in fellowship with God. We ought to be in conscious, constant communion with Him, with "the Father of our spirits, that we may live." We ought to be instant in prayer, praying without ceasing, being "anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, making our requests known to God." The communication set up by prayer between a congregation of believers and God in a temple, should perpetually exist between God and the individual soul. Prayer should be a part, and the most

unceasing part, of our daily labour. Prayer is the breath of the soul. Its exercise ought to be as instinctive to us as that of physical respiration, as it is as essentially necessary if we are to be temples of the living God, God dwelling in us, and walking in us, He our God, and we His people.

In like manner we ought to know God's Word, possessing it not as something external to us, but internal, written on the fleshy tablets of our hearts, as it is written on the inner sides of the walls of St. Mark's Church. At the same time we ought to exhibit God's Word. Our characters and lives ought to be a visible manifestation of God's Word and will. As temples this mutual fellowship ought to exist between God and the individual soul.

(4) *In the Temple all communion with God is through Christ.*—"Search the scriptures," said our Lord to the Jews, with reference to that portion of the Bible they possessed, "for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they that testify of me" (John v. 39); and, as the Emmaus disciples walked with Him that Sunday morning so long ago, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke xxiv. 27).

Yes, all Old Testament statement and prophecy, and type, and symbol, and sacrifice, pointed forward to the coming, and work, and the atoning death of Jesus Christ. "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?" (Luke xxiv. 25, 26). And in the word read and preached in the Christian temple, it is God in Christ that is its theme. God revealing Himself in Christ—Christ, "the image of the invisible God" (Col. i. 15). "Lord, show us the Father," said St. Philip. "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father," was our Lord's reply (John xiv. 8, 9). Christ's whole life was an unveiling of God to man. He was "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person" (Heb. i. 3). God is revealed in Christ as loving us: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16). God in Christ is revealed reconciling the world unto Himself. Christ is the mediator between God and man—the daysman, who, by virtue of His divine and human natures, can lay a hand upon us both. And in St. Mark's Church, Christ is alone

exhibited as the bond between God, the world, and man. There is no representation of God the Father in the Church, but of Christ only, through and by whom God works. In the Old Testament mosaics, in the atrium, it is through Christ that God creates all things, accepts Abel's sacrifice, instructs Noah to build the ark, appears to Abraham, guides Joseph, saves Moses, and forms the children of Israel into a nation. And in the New Testament mosaics, inside the church, it is God, manifest in the flesh, who is set forth in the incarnation, baptism, discourses, miracles, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord. It is the image of Christ that is sculptured on the keystones of the chief archivolts of every door by which the church is entered—not Christ's mother, not His apostles, not His saints, not His blessed sacraments, but Jesus Christ Himself, God and Man—thus teaching us that it is alone through Christ that the temple can be entered and communication be held with the great self-existent One, Whose house it is.

And thus should it be with us as temples. Christ is the bond that unites us to God. St. Paul says that in Christ we "are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit"

(Eph. ii. 22). What we ask in prayer, we ask in Christ's name and for His sake, remembering His promise, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John xiv. 13). Everything that we say and do ought to be in Christ's name. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. iii. 17). Christ ought to be the centre of our being, the key and explanation of our lives, Christ "who is made unto us, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. i. 30). As Christians we should, as the name implies, be seen by others to belong, not so much to this School or that, to this Church or that, to Paul, Apollos, or Cephas, as to Christ—bearing about with us, as St. Paul did, "the marks of the Lord Jesus" (Gal. vi. 17). Men should be able to take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus. To us to live, ought to be, in some measure, for Christ Himself to live. Christ ought to be "magnified," that is, shown to be great, in our bodies, "whether it be by life or by death."

Some one has said that "every Englishman is an eloquent witness for or against Christ

wherever he goes." The statement is true. Let us see to it that we witness for Christ, so that our lives may be what, as has been said, every true Christian's life should be, "a proclamation of our creed, easily intelligible, unquestionably sincere, and rapidly effective."

(5) *A Temple speaks of unity and fellowship.* —A temple is not built for one person, but for many. It is built for multitudes, but for multitudes of one heart and of one mind, baptized into one spirit, one in Christ and in Christian fellowship. The one large door, with or without smaller side ones, suggests this. Mr. Ruskin, speaking of doors, says: "The expression of the church door should lead us, as far as possible, to desire at least the western entrance to be single, partly because no man of right feeling would willingly lose the idea of unity and fellowship in going up to worship, which is suggested by the vast single entrance." Comparatively few temples, however, have but one entrance, although, as Mr. Ruskin has pointed out, this was a feature of all early Lombardic churches. Generally a temple, like St. Mark's, has several doors, one central and principal, and the others lateral and subordinate. But even here all are so proportioned in height and width to their

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THE ONE LARGE DOOR—SUGGESTIVE OF FELLOWSHIP

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relative importance, and to the size of the building, that they are suggestive of unity and fellowship. The same purpose is served by church bells, whether they ring out clearly and tunefully throughout the crowded city, or send their music on the breeze across fields and gardens in the pleasant country.

So ought it to be with us as Christians. Our appearance and behaviour ought to suggest unity and fellowship. Before Christ came we read of those who looked for His appearing, that they "spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name" (Mal. iii. 16). And after Christ's ascension we read that the apostles and disciples had all things in common, and that their common interest in each other caused the heathen to exclaim, "see how these Christians love one another." And though the Church is now divided up into many sections, still there ought to be, and there is, essential unity. There may not be intellectual unity, there may not be visible uniformity, but there ought to be unity of spirit, fellowship in Christ. We are all members of the same body, participating in common privileges,

incurring common obligations. We have all escaped a common danger, and are rejoicing in a common salvation. "There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all" (Eph. iv. 4, 5). We serve one master, Jesus Christ—"his servants shall serve him" (Rev. xxii. 3). There is unity of aim and purpose amid diversity of employment, for all are in everything obeying the master builder, all are "following the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." There is such a thing as the fellowship of saints, as the spiritual brotherhood of the redeemed.

We belong to a great family, to a great kingdom. Our faith has a combining unifying power, for in Christ Jesus "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, . . . there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Col. iii. 11 and Gal. iii. 28). "The essential bond of union," the late Bishop Westcott has said, "is not external, but spiritual. It consists not in one organisation, but in common principles of life. Its expression lies in a personal relation to Christ, not in any outward system.

The Temple was the symbol of unity for the children of Israel: "Hither the tribes go up." Again Bishop Westcott says: "One of the earliest images under which the unity of Christendom was described was that of many streams flowing from one source. The longer the streams flow, the greater will be their divergence. But the divergence is due to progress, and does not in any way destroy the unity of the waters which pass along the various courses. But the streams will not always be divided. They start from one source and they end in one ocean. They have been united outwardly, and they will again be united. Meanwhile the fashion of their currents is moulded by the country through which they pass, and this in turn furnishes the peculiar elements which they bear down to their common resting-place to form the foundations of a world to come."

Let us, as Christians, seek to remember that, as temples of the living God, we ought to exhibit unity and fellowship. I think we do so in these Continental services. Here in Venice, in this modest temple, or, as we may more appropriately call it, this upper room, we, though comparatively few in number, yet belong to different nationalities,

and to different sections of the Christian Church, and we also differ from each other in our intellectual views of many truths, and in the opinions we hold in regard to Church government and order, and religious rites and ceremonies. Yet what has brought us together here this morning? Is it not our common sense of unity and fellowship in Jesus Christ? Is it not to unitedly "render thanks" to God "for the great benefits that we have received at His hands, to set forth His most worthy praise, to hear His most holy Word, and to ask those things which are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul"? Let us pray that "we may henceforth be all of one heart and one soul, united in one bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify God; through Jesus Christ our Lord."

(6) *Lastly, the Temple is a place of hallowed associations.*—Think of the associations that clustered round the old Temple at Jerusalem for the pious Jew! What hallowed memories had it not for him! It was the symbol of his national existence. It was the symbol of the nation being God's people. How he loved it! In far-off captivity his whole soul

went out to it. "Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death" (Ps. xlviii. 12–14). "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple" (Ps. xxvii. 4). The Temple drew out all the sympathies and love of a Jew. Even in its desolation and destruction it was dear to him. "O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled" (Ps. lxxix. 1). Yet he hoped and prayed for its restoration. "Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion; for the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof" (Ps. cii. 13, 14).

And think, too, what associations St. Mark's Church must have had for the Venetians of the old Republic! As the sacred centre of the nation's life, civil, hardly less than ecclesiastical, for nearly a thousand years, how many momentous transactions took place there!

How many popular assemblies were held there! How many Doges were elected there! How many Doges took the oath of allegiance to the Constitution, and were crowned there! How many treaties and covenants were ratified there! How many wars were entered upon after Divine guidance sought there! How many *Te Deums* were sung there for victories granted to Venetian soldiers and sailors by the God of battles!

> "Not a stone
> In the broad pavement, but to him who has
> An eye, an ear for the Inanimate World,
> Tells of Past Ages."

And as it is with St. Mark's Church, so it must be with the cathedral churches of England, with the parish churches of Scotland, with all the city and village churches and chapels in the Old World, and in the New, where we were brought up. The temple is associated with our baptism; it was there that we were given to God in faith by our parents. It is associated with the tender years of our boyhood or girlhood, when it was said to us by our parents and guardians, "Let us go up unto the house of the Lord." It is associated with marriages and with funerals, and with the memories of friends with whom

"we took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company" (Ps. lv. 14). It is associated with the New Birth. "It shall be said this man and that man was born there." It is associated with visions of God, which, as it was with Isaiah, introduced us for the first time into God's service, or into a higher degree of it. It is associated with God's loving, providential dealings with us, with transforming experiences, with ennobling resolutions, with moments in our own spiritual history, that we would not willingly forget.

And, as temples of the living God, we, too, ought to be centres of hallowed associations. We ought to have personal experiences of God's kindness to us that we look back on with thankfulness and gratitude. Sometimes we may be temples possessing hallowed associations for others. We may have been the instrument of this one's conversion, and of that one's comfort. Men and women may think of us with thankfulness to God, when they recall solemn periods in their histories, crises in their lives. They may thank God through time and through eternity that they were ever brought into contact with us. The Christian, as the temple of God, of the living God, ought thus to be one around whom

cluster the most precious memories and most hallowed associations.

May God grant that all of us, and all who are professing Christians, may be everything that the figure of the text suggests. In the Book of the Revelation (chap. xi. 1), John, the Evangelist, tells us that there was given him a reed, and that he was commanded to rise and measure the Temple of God, the *ναός*, God's dwelling-place, but that the court, that is the *ἱερόν*, which was without the Temple, he was told to leave out, and not to measure it, for it was to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles. There thus comes a day of separation, when God's real children are to be gathered together unto everlasting life and felicity, whilst those who are only nominally His are to be left out. May all of us be found on that day to be in deed and in truth "TEMPLES OF GOD," "TEMPLES OF THE LIVING GOD."

VII

THE STILLING OF THE TEMPEST

"And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest."

—Isaiah xxxii. 2.

VII

THE STILLING OF THE TEMPEST

"*And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.*"—MARK iv. 39.

THE Jews cannot be called a seafaring people, though many of them were sailors and fishermen. All the tribes whose possessions were to the west of Jordan touched the sea-board of the Mediterranean—Asher, Zebulun, Issachar, Manasseh, Ephraim, and Dan. Of one of these tribes — Zebulun — Jacob, looking down the centuries, said, "Zebulun shall dwell on the shore of seas, and he shall be for an haven of ships," which became literally true, for the tribe extended from the Sea of Galilee to the Mediterranean, its inhabitants being fishermen on the one, and merchant sailors on the other. And of this tribe and of Issachar Moses said, "They shall suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand."

During the period of national glory under Solomon, the Jews had a merchant navy, as we read in 1 Kings ix. 26: "And king Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber, which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom;" and again in the following chapter, "For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram; once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks."

And where shall we find, in the literature of any nation, such wise, pious, beautiful poetic allusions to the sea as we find in the Bible? Though, compared with what we know, the scientific knowledge the Jews possessed of the sea was little, and their practical knowledge of it was limited, yet they knew more about it than all other contemporary nations, and their language regarding it is our heritage to-day. There can be no doubt that the miracle of the passage of the Red Sea made a tremendous impression on the national mind, and helped them to see in the ocean itself, and in all its changing moods, manifestations of Divine power and wisdom. "The sea is his, and he made it" (Ps. xcv. 5). "He gave to the sea his decree, that the waters

should not pass his commandment" (Prov. viii. 29). "He shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth" (Job xxxviii. 8). "He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses" (Ps. xxxiii. 7). "Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them" (Ps. lxxxix. 9). "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord and his wonders in the deep" (Ps. cvii. 23, 24).

The very noise of the sea was to the Jew its praising God: "Let the sea roar and the fulness thereof" (Ps. xcviii. 7). And if the sea in its disquietude and dispeace was an emblem of the state of the wicked, "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt" (Isa. lvii. 20); the sea in its swallowing up out of sight for ever what is thrown into it, suggested the completeness of forgiveness: "Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Micah vii. 19). And the sea, in its length and breadth and depth, symbolised the universality of Christ's Kingdom: "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Ps. lxxii. 8). "The earth shall be

full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. xi. 9.)

And in the New Testament Scriptures the references, if not to the ocean, yet to the inland seas of Palestine, are most interesting. How intimately is the Sea of Galilee associated with the life and the ministry of our Lord! As M'Cheyne has said:—

> "How pleasant to me thy deep blue wave,
> O Sea of Galilee,
> For the gracious one who came to save,
> Hath often stood by thee.
> Fair are the lakes in the land I love,
> Where pine and heather grow,
> But thou hast loveliness above
> What nature can bestow."

They were fishermen of Galilee whom Christ called to be His disciples. As He walked by the shore He found Simon and Andrew casting their nets into the sea, for they were fishers, and He called them, and they followed Him; and going on from thence He found James and John, the sons of Zebedee, mending their nets, and them also He called, and they forsook all, and followed Him. The Sea of Galilee is associated with our Lord's parables. It was in a boat, that had been thrust out a little from the land, that He sat, and taught the people

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gathered on the shore, by means of parables—those of the Sower, of the Seed growing secretly, of the Mustard-seed, and many others. It is associated also with His miracles: with the first and second Miraculous Draughts of Fishes, with His Walking on the Water, with the Money in the Fish's Mouth, and with the miracle I have chosen for our study this morning—the Stilling of the Tempest.

For us travellers coming from the sea-girt land of Britain—our wealth, our safety, our pride, our glory being our battleships and merchant fleets, and gallant sailors; and for those of us who are from America, with its rising navy and extensive sea-board, all Bible references to the sea, and especially those that associate our Lord with it, must have a peculiar interest. And none the less interest ought they to have for us here in Venice, where we find ourselves to-day—a city built, not on the land, but in the sea, the salt sea wavelets breaking on the foundations of its lordly palaces — whose inhabitants loved the sea, wedding it anew every year on Ascension Day, by going to the Lido Port, where the Doge dropped into the Adriatic a ring, saying, "*Desponsamus te Mare*" (We wed thee, O Sea)—a city which was the England of past

centuries, with its fleets of ships, built by its own hands in the great Arsenal near us, for commerce and for war, and with its flags floating proudly on the breeze in all waters, proclaiming it to be the "undisputed Mistress of the Seas."

The Venetians themselves were fond of Bible references to the sea, and so they have depicted in mosaic, in the Church of St. Mark, all the miracles of our Lord connected with it—The Miraculous Draught of Fishes, His Walking on the Water, and the one which we are now considering.

The Stilling of the Tempest is related by all the three writers of the Synoptic Gospels. Their accounts are full and varied, each one supplementing and completing the others.

The scene of the miracle was, as I have said, the Lake of Galilee, or Gennesaret. The time of it was evening. Jesus had just completed a trying day of toil. He had apparently begun the day by teaching in the house; then, as the people gathered in ever increasing numbers to hear Him, He had gone out of the house, and taught by the sea-side; and then as the numbers still further increased, becoming a great multitude, He had entered into a ship, and taught them

out of it. Christ, therefore, wearied with His labours, and desirous of being alone, and at rest, said to the disciples, "Let us pass over unto the other side." The disciples, therefore, sent the multitudes away, and, following Jesus into the ship, they launched forth.

"But as they sailed," we read, "he fell asleep." St. Mark, to whose Gospel we are indebted for so many graphic details, adds, "in the hinder part of the ship, on a pillow."

As the Lake of Galilee is surrounded by mountains, separated by deep narrow gorges, it is liable to be disturbed by sudden and violent squalls. In such a squall the little boat, bearing the disciples and Jesus asleep, was caught. It must have been a very severe one, for the word used by St. Matthew to describe it, σεισμός (*seismos*), is, as Archbishop Trench says, "used very rarely indeed for a storm at sea. It is the technical word for an earthquake." This same Greek word has entered into our language in connection with the same phenomena, as, for instance, seismic area, seismograph and seismometer, instruments for measuring and registering earthquakes, and seismology, the science of

earthquakes. Violent, sometimes terrific, winds often accompany earthquakes. The most fierce and furious winds I ever felt were those that blew during the disastrous earthquakes that visited the Italian and French Rivieras in 1887. Probably it was an earthquake-hurricane the disciples were in. The word used by St. Mark and St. Luke to describe it conveys the idea of rain and darkness as well as wind. "The ship," St. Matthew says, "was covered with the waves." St. Mark says, "The waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full," and St. Luke adds, "And they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy."

Yet, through it all, Jesus tranquilly slept. The disciples, knowing the lake well as fishermen, and, no doubt, not unfamiliar with its storms, did not seem at the first brush of danger to have gone to Him, but to have done what they could themselves, unwilling to awaken Him. The very fact that Jesus was with them, must have given them a certain sense of security. But at last they could restrain themselves no longer, and their terrors carried them away. With many and varied and hurried expressions (for each Evangelist reports a different one), all indicating fear and dread, they awoke Christ, crying

out, "Master, master, we perish"—"Lord, save us, we perish"—"Master, carest thou not that we perish?"

Their conduct was very natural. Believing that Christ could help them, or they would never have gone to Him, they yet completely failed to realise their absolute safety in the presence of the Lord of Nature. They had faith, but it was weak. Their belief was mixed with much unbelief. And so Christ first rebuked them, saying: "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?"—"How are ye so fearful, how is it that ye have no faith?"—"Where is your faith?"—and then Christ "rose, and rebuked the winds and the sea," saying unto the sea, as St. Mark tells us, "Peace, be still." Archbishop Trench says: "We must not miss the force of that word 'rebuked,' preserved by all three Evangelists, and as little the direct address to the furious elements, 'Peace, be still.' To regard this as a mere personification would be absurd—rather is there here, as Maldonatus truly remarks, a distinct tracing up of all the discords and disharmonies in the outward world to their source in a person . . . even as this person can be none other than Satan."

It is curious how in all nations and amongst

all peoples storms and tempests are associated with Satan. North of Trieste there is a great stretch of country, called in Italian *Carso*, and in English Karst. The famous caves of Adelsberg are situated in it. This country is wild, rocky, desolate. It is true that heather and broom grows over it to relieve its gloom, but it is strewn thickly everywhere with grey rocks and boulders, and one cannot walk but a few yards without coming to what are called *Dolinen*, funnel-shaped holes, some small and shallow, but many large and going down to a considerable depth. Now over this country blows the *Bora*, a north-eastern wind of terrific force and velocity, which upsets carts, uproots trees, and is felt even in the harbour of Trieste as a dangerous wind, often driving ships from their anchorage. This wind is one peculiar to the Karst. It takes its rise there. Indeed the Karst seems to create it, for when a piece of that wild country is improved, the wind diminishes, and when a piece of it is entirely brought under cultivation, and inhabited, the wind ceases altogether. Is this because, as the inhabitants believe, Satan, the Prince of the power of the air, still inhabits these dry desert places, seeking rest, and finding none, and because he disappears before man, and

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cultivation, and civilisation? Then we all know how, when clergymen are passengers on board a ship, the sailors are apt to attribute to their presence, like that of Jonah, any storm that may arise. When in Scotland I had often occasion to sail up its east coast to and from Orkney, and sailors have often said to me, "We shall have a stormy passage, sir—too many of your profession on board." The idea underlying the expression being again that Satan raises storms in order to destroy the servants of Christ. Perhaps Satan raised this storm on the Lake of Galilee in order to try and destroy Christ Himself. We are apt to think that after his defeat at the temptation, Satan ceased further to attack Christ. But this was not the case, for we read, "And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him *for a season*." At the same time I do not believe, and we must guard against believing, that there are two powers in the world, one working for good and one for evil. Satan can only exercise a power for evil akin to that we can exercise—the product of the perverted will of a morally free agent.

The furious elements, and Satan who stirred them and moved in them, heard Christ's voice, and obeyed. The wind and the raging of the

sea ceased, and there was "a great calm." The wind fell, and, a miracle in itself, the sea fell with it, suddenly and completely. The effect of this most extraordinary miracle on the minds of the disciples, and of those with them in the ship, was that they marvelled, and wondered, and feared exceedingly. Before the miracle they were afraid in the presence of the storm, but now they are still more afraid, though after a different fashion, in the presence of Christ. They realised Him to stand in a strange relationship to the elements, and to exercise lordship over them, "And they, being afraid, wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him." How applicable what had been said long before, "O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong God like unto thee, or to thy faithfulness round about thee? Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise thou stillest them" (Ps. lxxxix. 8, 9). How true, also, these other words of the Psalmist: "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves

thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven" (Ps. cvii. 23–30).

The Venetian fishermen caught in sudden squalls on the Adriatic, and her merchant soldiers and sailors caught in storms as they sailed east and west in the Mediterranean, as too often would happen, must have often thought of this miracle, and, thereby awakening their sleeping faith in Christ, have found safety and succour; and on their safe return to Venice must have often studied it, as it is depicted, very strikingly and truthfully, on the north vault of the north transept of their church. The mosaic represents Christ, first calmly sleeping, as if in weakness and weariness, at one end of the boat, his arm hanging over its side, and almost drenched with the whirling waters; and then, standing erect at its stern, the Lord of Nature, clothed with

omnipotence, rebuking with authority the winds and waters, which obey Him.

Let us bring the matter home to ourselves. Though British battleships and cruisers, and British merchant steamships, are very different from the small boats that sailed the Lake of Galilee, still they are all exposed to storm and tempest, that sometimes try both the sailor and the ship; and they are never safe from collision in fog and darkness, nor from being directed out of their course by unseen influences, to crash upon sunken reefs or rocky headlands. And new perils and dangers attend new maritime inventions and ship-building developments. And British sailors, not less than Venetian ones, should, and, I have no doubt, often do, find comfort and hope in thinking of Him "who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand" (Isa. xl. 12); and who gave "to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment" (Prov. viii. 29). If there are amongst our sailors godless, careless men, there are many who are Christians, and who manfully and fearlessly witness for Christ on board their ships, and can use the words of brave Sir Humphrey Gilbert, in the days of Queen Elizabeth, who, just before his little frigate of

ten tons went down in a storm in mid-Atlantic, cried out cheerfully to his companion vessel, "We are as near heaven by sea as by land."

We are all sailors, are we not, on the sea of life? Life is often compared to a voyage. It is a very common figure of speech. We are all sailing and voyaging. If this is so we ought to be sailing somewhere. We ought not to be drifting hither and thither. We ought to have a port in view. What is our port? I suppose to that question most would answer, our port is heaven. There is no reason why we should not all gain that port, but we shall never gain it by drifting. If Satan is the Prince of the power of the air, we may be sure that he will not send us favouring breezes to waft us thither. No, he will rather raise for us contrary winds and violent storms, to drive us out of our course, or meet us with enticing Siren songs to lure us away from it. It is a marvellous thing how circumstances seem to arrange themselves to favour evil-doing. Italians call this *una combinazione*, and it is amazing how often the expression is used to explain and excuse some misdeed.

Nor shall we gain heaven by our seamanship. We cannot find it for ourselves. No,

the first thing to be done, if we would gain heaven, is to take Christ on board, to take Him with us in the ship, as did the disciples. He, and He alone, knows the way thither. He is the Way, as He is the Truth and the Life.

And Christ does not promise us a calm, peaceful voyage, He only promises us a safe one. We are all exposed to blasts of temptation. We often raise storms for ourselves by uncontrolled passion or temper, and those, too, to whom we not unnaturally look for guidance sometimes lead us astray. Some teachers and writers in the present day seem to take pleasure in seeking out all the shoals and reefs and sunken rocks they can find in the Bible, and out of it, and in running their own boats against them, and in inviting their students and readers to come out of their course and see the dangers they have discovered. "I suppose you know all the shoals and rocks in these waters?" said a timid passenger to the captain of a vessel. "No, indeed," was the reply. "I do not pretend to know anything of the kind. But," he added significantly, "I know where the deep water lies." And that is really all we need to know. In Christ there is deep water—the deep water of His love, and of our Heavenly

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INTRICACIES OF LAGOON NAVIGATION

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Father's love in Him. Hugh Miller tells a story of a boy whom some fishermen took with them in their boat to sea. And, when he got back, he told his father where he had been—how they sailed farther and farther away until the land appeared but a dark line in the distance, and how they let down the lead and coil after coil of rope was exhausted before it touched the bottom. And he said to his father, "And was not that the great ocean they carried me to?" His father said, "My boy, you have not seen the ocean, you have seen but one of its little arms; for had it been the mighty ocean they had carried you to, you would have seen no shore and you would have found no bottom." And such is the Love of God, the Love of Christ—it is a sea shoreless, fathomless, infinite, divine. In this Love we can rest, and, whilst feeling the interest of all intellectual religious problems, cease to be worried or to feel anxious about their solution.

"Through the love of God our Saviour
All will be well.
. . . . . .
On our Father's love relying,
Jesus every need supplying,
Or in living, or in dying,
All must be well."

And having Christ with us in our ship of life, let us allow Him to be our pilot all the way. Let us put our whole trust and confidence in Him, feeling that, in spite of all appearance to the contrary, He will give us a prosperous end to our voyage; that He will say to the troubled mind and heart, "Peace, be still;" that He will enable us to say, even amid storms and tempest, "Let the sea roar and the fulness thereof," being perfectly sure that He will bring us into the desired haven.

And it is with us as with ships—the greatest dangers are oftenest met with at the beginning of our voyage. It is in-shore that there is danger, much more than on the open sea. All vessels leaving Venice carry pilots on board; they can dispense with them as soon as they get clear of the shallows and sandbanks, the shoals and islands that close in this city. And how often have we seen the sea rough and stormy near the shore, whilst away out in the offing it would be lying like a silver mirror, reflecting the calm and peace of heaven! So it is in youth that we are most exposed to dangers and difficulties, and many, too many, never get fairly started in life at all, but become wrecks at the very harbour mouth. But once

good habits are formed, and once we get established in the Christian life, the voyage is comparatively safe and pleasant.

Lastly, when a ship arrives at the port, it is not the end of the ship, it is but the end of the voyage. Therefore, death to us is not the end of life, it is only the completion of our earthly voyage. As the late Bishop of Lincoln has said, "Death is not an end, but an event in life—indeed, a new start for an extended knowledge and a purer love;" or as the late Bishop of Durham puts it: "Physical death touches only the circumstances of our present existence; dissolution is the condition of a new form of life, but not an interruption, still less the close of life."

Yes, we shall be for ever sailing, voyaging, "Nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee;" only, there will be no more storms and tempests, nor sunken reefs, nor dangerous headlands, for, so far as the possibility of shipwrecks is concerned, there will be "no more sea" (Rev. xxi. 1); for the sea "before the throne" is "a sea of glass, like unto crystal" (Rev. iv. 6).

VIII

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass."—ZECH. ix. 9.

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THE PROPHET ZACCARIAH

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Mail

VIII

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

"*And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!*"—MATT. xxi. 9.

TO-DAY is what is called in the Church's Calendar Palm Sunday, when the minds of Christians throughout the world are being very generally directed to that great event in our Lord's life—His *Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem.* I have, therefore, chosen it for our morning's study, that we may thus enter into fellowship with our fellow-Christians everywhere; and I pray that the consideration of it may be profitable to us.

The festival of Palm Sunday was instituted in 877 by Pope John VIII., and was soon afterwards introduced into the Venetian Church Calendar. Not that Venice in such matters commonly followed the example of the Roman

Catholic Church. Far from that, she had her own Church Calendar, just as she had her own Bible (the *Vetus Itala*, not the Vulgate) and her own Church ceremonial, the Aquileian rite, not the Roman one. And her calendar was remarkable in having, like the Church of England Calendar of to-day, festivals mainly in remembrance of great events in the life of our Lord; but no common Saints'-days.

As commemorating one of these great events, Palm Sunday was always carefully observed in Venice, and observed in a way peculiar to the Republic. Before, therefore, entering upon the study of the subject itself, I should like briefly to refer to some of the peculiarities in the Venetian observance of it. It is rather strange that the pigeons of the Piazza of St. Mark are a memento of Palm Sunday. At the close of the religious service in the Church of St. Mark there was a procession in which the Doge, the Senators, and the Magistrates took part, each one carrying blanched and plaited palm branches, such as those prepared and used on the Riviera at the present time. That of the Doge, however, was a large artificial one, with leaves made of gold, silver, and silk. When the procession arrived before the main door of

the church, it halted, and the choir sang the hymn beginning—

"All glory, praise, and honour
To Thee, Redeemer King."

Whilst this was being sung the sacristans ascended to the open gallery that runs above the doors, where now are the bronze horses, and let loose a flock of various kinds of birds, amongst which were many pigeons in pairs. These pigeons were weighted with *cartocci* (cartouches) tied to their feet. Meanwhile the Piazza of St. Mark, the great open-air drawing-room of Venice, was filled with thousands of sight-seers, many of whom had come to the city for the occasion, all waiting to enjoy the sport, and, if possible, to catch the birds. As these flew heavily above the laughing, leaping, roaring, rushing crowd, many, of course, were caught, but not a few managed to elude every grasp, and to find a safe asylum among the cupolas and columns and carvings of St. Mark's Church. For those that thus escaped the church became a "sanctuary," and sanctuary privileges were accorded them. For each festival three flocks of birds were provided, so thrice there was the grand flutter of wings and weighted limbs overhead, and thrice the

excitement and amusement of the chase. In the course of a few years the birds, whose life had been given them for a prey, began to multiply, and to become a feature of the Church and Piazza. It was then that the Government declared them to be sacred, and dedicated them to the Evangelist whose protection they had originally sought. Further, it decreed that they were no longer to be included in the flocks of birds that were let loose for the amusement of the people on Palm Sundays. A daily supply of corn was assigned them out of the public granaries, and the *Proveditori di Grano* were charged with the duty of seeing that it was regularly given. It was also decreed to be a serious offence to molest them in any way, and that any one caught so doing should be liable to a fine.

Inside the church there is another memento of Palm Sunday, in the shape of a beautiful and impressive mosaic of the incident this day commemorates. It is one of the oldest in the church, having been put up in the eleventh century. It occupies a very conspicuous position, on the eastern side of the vault of the south transept, thus being easily seen by most worshippers in the church. I may here say that mosaics which, like this, make known

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THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

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Christ's power and greatness have all been assigned prominent places in St. Mark's. The old Venetians did not adore a dead Christ. The Venetians' Christ was a living Saviour, able and willing and waiting to help.

The mosaic of the Triumphal Entry is very quaint and very striking. Christ, the central figure, is represented riding into Jerusalem on a white ass, on which He is seated not astride, but sideways. In His left hand He holds a scroll—the Book of the Law, and with His right hand raised He bestows His blessing. Behind Him are the disciples, and a multitude of people. Before Him is the city gate, out of which people are coming to meet Him, waving palm branches. Men, women, and children around are paying Him the royal honour of spreading their garments in the way, whilst some, having climbed up into palms and other evergreen trees, are cutting down branches and strewing them on the road.

The Triumphal Entry was, as I have said, an event of very great moment in the life of our Lord. It must have impressed itself deeply on the minds of those who witnessed it, for it is recorded by all the four Evangelists. And this fourfold account of it has been given to us that we, too, might realise

its importance, and be impressed by it, as we have seen the Venetians were, in common, I believe, with the early Christians.

It occurred at a critical moment in our Lord's life. The period of His earthly sojourn among men was drawing to a close. The time of His humiliation was almost ended. He was about to enter into His glory, although between this incident and His Ascension there lay the Agony and Betrayal, the Crucifixion and Burial—events to which, however, He looked unflinchingly forward. It was a prelude to the Passion, and probably was a means of preparing Him for it.

But looking back on His past life, how little success seems to have attended His efforts to reveal Himself to His countrymen as their Messiah! Truly "He was despised and rejected of men." "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." But now new proofs of His Messiahship thickened, as if He longed that the scales might fall from His countrymen's eyes, that the veil might be removed from their hearts, and that they might accept Him as their Saviour before it was too late—oh, that they might know the things that belonged to their peace before that they were hid from their eyes, as they were

soon to be. Indeed this was the last great offer Christ made to them of Himself as their Saviour.

In the Psalms, and especially in the book of the prophet Zechariah, it was foretold of the Messiah that He would, as a King, make a triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The prophet Zechariah wrote, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee. He is just, and having salvation." He was to be just, and yet to bring pardon to His rebellious subjects; Righteousness and Mercy were to be united in His person and government. Still He was to be a humble King—"lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass;" although we must remember that into this lowly action there entered no element of littleness or meanness — nothing, indeed, inconsistent with regal dignity. For the ass in the East is not the despised animal it is with us. It is in itself, and is regarded as, a very noble creature. To ride on an ass was often a thing of honour and distinction. When Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth, met King David (2 Sam. xvi. 12) with a couple of asses saddled, and when David asked him, "What meanest thou by these?" he answered,

"The asses be for the king's household to ride on." Governors and magistrates, prophets and judges, and persons of distinction rode on white asses (Judges v. 10).

So likewise did Oriental princes. And it is a curious link of Venice with the East, that the Doge and his Senators, and the Procurators of St. Mark's Church, the noblest class of men in Venice, from amongst whom the Doge was invariably chosen, rode on white asses. There was nothing discreditable, then, in our Lord choosing an ass to ride on. On the contrary, had our Lord ridden on an horse it would have been discreditable, for the horse is, in the prophets, as Canon Liddon has said, "the symbol of worldly power." "I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem," is the prediction of the fall of a worldly monarchy.

We may notice that this is the only instance in which we read of Christ riding. He was poor, and so He walked, walked even to weariness. "Jesus, therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well." But now, as a Prophet and as a Prince, He rode regally and yet humbly.

In the fact that He had not an ass of His own, but had to borrow one, there is also a

GROUP OF EASTERN PALMS

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manifestation of combined humility and glory —of humility, in His being under the necessity of borrowing; of glory, in the manner in which He did it, for He did it as a King: "Go into the village," He said, "and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me;" and, anticipating any scruples that might arise in the minds of the disciples, He added, "and if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them." Yes, Christ borrowed as a King—"The Master," He who is Lord of all, to whom belongs every beast of the field, and the cattle upon a thousand hills, He "hath need of them." Their owner would recognise himself to be, what each one really is, only the steward of what he possessed, down even to the beast he rode on. "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body and your spirit, which are God's." Of course there is nothing improbable in the supposition that the owner of the ass and foal may have known Jesus, may even have been His disciple. He evidently knew to whom the term "Lord," used by the disciples, applied; and he recognised Christ's lordship over himself and over his possessions.

And now, as St. Matthew wrote especially to convince his countrymen that Jesus was the Messiah of Old Testament type and prophecy, he adds, "All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Zion, behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass." Zechariah speaks of two animals. Why two? Probably because our Lord wished to ride on an animal on which never man had ridden, an unbroken colt, which would go quietly only if its mother walked beside it.

Christ thus offered Himself to the Jews as their Messiah, their King, and Saviour, and the exact fulfilment of the prophecy of Zechariah, which was one much regarded by the Jews, ought to have persuaded them that Jesus was the Christ. As a result, the disciples were confirmed in their belief in Jesus as the Messiah, and many others were converted to that belief.

The disciples, having brought the ass and the colt, we read, "put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon." By doing this they publicly acknowledged Christ's Messiahship, as did also the owner of the animals by giving them up for Christ's use. And a

great multitude—"a very great multitude"—also hailed Him as the Messiah and paid Him homage as their King; for they, too, stripped off their garments and strawed them in the way, that Jesus might pass on as a King and as their King. We have illustrations in the Old Testament Scriptures of similar recognitions of sovereignty: for example, in 2 Kings ix. 13, we read, when Jehu was raised to the throne, "Then the people hasted, and took every man his garment, and put it under him on the top of the stairs, and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king!" We have in modern times the act of Sir Walter Raleigh, who stripped himself of his rich cloak, and spread it over a muddy pool, that Queen Elizabeth might pass on dry-shod. "Others also," we read, "cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way." This, too, was a recognition of Christ as a King, and as a triumphant King, as a conquering hero, "leading captivity captive." The palm, the symbol of victory over death, was most appropriately used in the case of Him who conquered death for us.

Again, we read that "the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord;

Hosanna in the highest." These words emphatically show that those who used them accepted Jesus as their Messiah. "Hosanna! Save now! Help now! Lord, thou son of David, help now! succour now!"

Lastly, as all this acclamation, and this cutting down of branches of trees, were associated with the Feast of Tabernacles, the most happy and joyous of the Jewish feasts, there was here a further recognition that Jesus was the Messiah to whose joyous coming all these feasts pointed forward.

But while there was this general and hearty recognition of Jesus as the Messiah on the part of the great multitude, there was also on the part of some an open rejection of Him. "Some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out."

And now let us gather up a few of the lessons which this great event in the life of our Lord is fitted to teach us.

(*a*) *It teaches us that Jesus is Christ.*—From our consideration of it we may say what Philip said to Nathanael: "We have found

PIGEONS OF ST. MARK

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him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." In Him all Old Testament Messianic prophecies found their fulfilment. Jesus, therefore, is Christ, the Sent of God, the Anointed of God, the Saviour of the world, our only Saviour—"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," but our omnipotent Saviour, able and willing "to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him."

(*b*) *It teaches us that whilst Jesus is our Saviour, He is also our King.*—Jesus makes tremendous claims upon us. He demands our homage, our obedience, our worship, ourselves. "My son, my daughter, give me thy heart." When Christ comes, He comes to reign. Canon Liddon, referring to the claim our Lord made to the use of the ass and its colt, says: "This claim implies our Lord's Divinity. But it was a very modest claim compared to others He made on those who heard Him. To ask for a man's cattle is little compared with asking for his affections, for his thoughts, for his endeavours, for the surrender of his will, for the sacrifice

of his liberty, for the abandonment, if need be, of all earthly happiness, and of life itself." Yet this is the claim which Jesus Christ, as our Sovereign as well as our Saviour, makes.

(*c*) *It teaches us that Jesus comes at times, offering Himself very specially to us as our Saviour.*—On this occasion, by so publicly and conspicuously fulfilling outstanding Old Testament Messianic prophecies, which weighed much with His countrymen, He offered Himself in a very special manner to them as their Saviour. And Jesus does this still. He comes to us very specially at times in His providential dealings with us, at sundry times and in divers manners, pressing His claims upon us, as our Saviour, and tenderly begging our acceptance of Him. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

(*d*) *It teaches us that sooner or later Jesus comes offering Himself to us as our Saviour for the last time.*—As we have seen, He dealt so with His countrymen on this occasion. With this offer of Himself, He closed their day of grace. Having made it, the "Master of the house" rose up, and "shut the door." And

Christ acts in this way still. In the history of individuals and nations there comes a day when for the last time Jesus presses Himself upon them as their Saviour. No one knows when that time may come. Hence the call to accept Him at once, without hesitancy or delay. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." "Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

(*e*) *It teaches us, lastly, that Christ is ever, in the experience of those to whom He comes, a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death.*— On this occasion many individuals accepted Him. He was to many a savour of life unto life. But many also rejected Him, and the Jews did so as a nation. Hence our Saviour's pathetic lamentation, as the view of the city burst upon Him from the slopes of Olivet. "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." Let us see to it that we are not amongst those who reject Him, "who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." Let us see to it that Christ is in our experience "a savour of life unto life," that in Him we go from

strength to strength, from life to life. Thomas Carlyle, in his *Sartor Resartus*, speaks of life as a succession of falls. It may be so when led out of Christ; it never can be so when led in Him. No man led a more strenuous life, a more suffering life, than the Apostle Paul—"in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft"—and yet what is his view of it? In old age, looking back on it, he feels himself to be a conqueror, and exclaims, like a Roman General enjoying a triumph, along whose paths flowers were strewn and sweet spices scattered and incense burned, "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place." It is thus possible for us to make our lives what our Lord's was on this occasion—a triumphal procession—not only in spite of trials and sufferings, but by means of such experiences. For what says the Apostle Paul in another place? "For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." Triumphing thus in, and with, Christ here below, we shall share with Him

GROUP OF BORDIGHERA PALMS

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the fruits of victory in His kingdom above, having a place amongst that "great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," who stand "before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

IX

THE ASCENSION

"Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

—Hebrews i. 3.

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SETTING OUT TO WED THE ADRIATIC

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IX

THE ASCENSION

"*While they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.*"

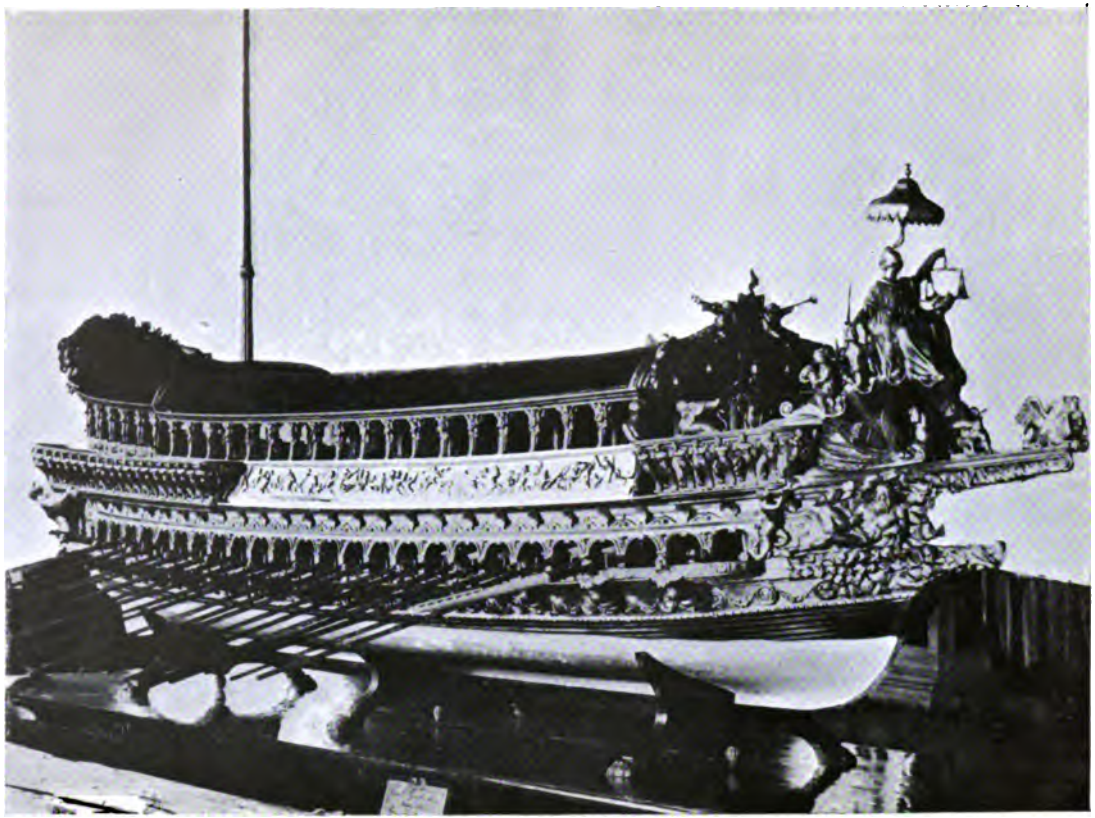
—Acts i. 9.

The subject of our study this morning is one common to all Christendom to-day—namely, the Ascension, and I purpose dealing with it almost exclusively from the standpoint of the old Venetians. For if there was one event in the life of our Lord which, more than any other, seems to have impressed their minds, and to which they assigned a peculiar importance, it was the Ascension.

Thus, one of the first churches they built in Venice was in commemoration of this event. It was called the Church of the Ascension. They built it, also, not in any out-of-the-way place, but in the very centre of the city's life. It stood facing St. Mark's Church at the opposite end of the Piazza, which was then a green garden. It was in existence down to recent times, having been demolished only in 1824,

to make room for the extension of the Royal Palace that completes the quadrangle. It gave its name to all the little *calli* that converge towards the Piazza of St. Mark at that western end, and, as they still bear these names, they serve to recall its existence and its site. They are called *Calle Prima dell' Ascensione; Calle seconda dell' Ascensione; Ramo Primo*, and *Ramo Secondo dell' Ascensione;* and *Calle Larga dell' Ascensione.*

Again, the greatest, the grandest, the most imposing, and the most impressive of all the festivals in the Venetian calendar was that of the Ascension. It was on Ascension Day that the Doge, after solemn service in St. Mark's Church, showed himself to the people in all his regal magnificence, and, accompanied by his red-robed Senators and Councillors, by the Ambassadors of foreign States, and by all in authority, embarked on the *Bucintoro* (so called from two words *buza*, a ship, and *oro*, gold, and therefore described by an old chronicler as "the most magnificent vessel that was perhaps ever constructed in the world, completely gilded, but with gold without alloy"), and rowed, not by common sailors, but by 320 of the young nobles of Venice, four at each of its eighty oars, and, followed



P. Salviati Photo

THE BUCINTORO

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by thousands in boats and gondolas, set out to wed the Adriatic. Arrived at the Port of Lido, a solemn and significant prayer was first offered that God would calm the ocean's troubled waters; and then that He would calm their troubled hearts, and in the right way, by removing sin's disturbing element, the petition being, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;" after which the Doge, rising from his throne, dropped from the stern of the vessel a golden ring into the sea, pronouncing at the same time the words, "*Desponsamus te Mare! in signum veri perpetuique dominii Serenissimæ Republicæ Venetæ*" (We wed thee, O Sea! in token of the true and perpetual dominion of the Most Serene Venetian Republic).

It was on Ascension Day, too, that there was opened in St. Mark's Square, which was filled up with booths for the occasion, the great annual fair of Venice, which was one of the greatest fairs in the world at that time. At it everything was to be seen and to be bought. It was a great industrial mart. As an old chronicler says: "There were displayed the finest productions of the East, with our own, which vied with them in excellence." It was a great art exhibition, for, as this same chronicler says: "Our painters and

sculptors regarded it as the beginning of their glory, as the road that conducted them to fame." It lasted first for eight, but latterly for fifteen days, and was attended by travellers and merchants, by seekers after the curious, and by admirers of the beautiful, from all parts of the world.

Then on Ascension Day, and on many succeeding days, as long as the fair lasted, figures of the Magi came out of the Clock Tower on to the platform in front of the Infant Christ in Mary's arms, and, passing before Christ, worshipped Him, presenting their gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh—a pictorial lesson to those rich traders in the Piazza below, that all their wealth should be consecrated to Him, and one which has been annually inculcated after the same fashion down to the present time.

Lastly, in St. Mark's Church the representation in mosaic of the Ascension occupies the place of honour. It fills the whole central dome—the chief dome of the Church—and it is depicted with a wonderful amplitude of thought, and beauty of design and arrangement. In its utmost height there is portrayed the risen and glorified Saviour, who, seated on a rainbow, and with a rainbow under His feet,

and enshrined in a *mandora* which is borne by angels, rises into the blue, starry vault of heaven, "ascending up where he was before,' far above all suns and worlds. In His left hand He holds a scroll, the written Word; whilst with His right He blesses the apostles, evangelists, and disciples, who are gazing upward at Him from amongst the trees of Olivet below. Under the apostles' feet, in the wall spaces between the windows of the cupola, are sixteen figures, representing sixteen virtues, each bearing a scroll with a benediction inscribed upon it. Mr. Ruskin thinks that they have a special adaptation for sea life, and that there is one for every wind that blows. Then in the spandrels below the cupola are the four evangelists in the act of writing their Gospels, whilst under their feet are the four rivers of Paradise, Gihon, Euphrates, Tigris, and Pison, now transformed for us into the four streams of the Gospel, carrying new life and new fertility into the four corners of the globe, undoing the curse of the Fall, and making all things new.

Now, why was it that the old Venetians centred their minds thus on the Ascension? Why did they thus so conspicuously represent it, and connect it with so many and so important national works and festivities? In seeking an

answer to such questions, I have no doubt we shall ourselves be helped to understand the subject better, and to derive profit from it.

God teaches us by events, as well as by words—by historic facts, as well as by historic utterances. And in the Ascension both these modes of teaching are united. We have the great event of the Ascension, we have the words then spoken by Christ and by the two men in white. The Venetians grasped both event and words, and the lessons they convey. The marvellousness of the event must have struck them—a man like themselves passing bodily, visibly, upward into the blue sky, connecting earth with heaven, this life with another life, suggesting continuity of life, suggesting life in another state, and in another place.

It was a unique event in the history of man, in the history of the world. There was something mysterious in the departure of Enoch. "Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." There was something mysterious about the departure of Moses. He "went up," we read, "from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah . . . his eye was not dim, nor his natural strength abated," and he never returned. God buried him, and "no man knoweth of his

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THE ASCENSION CUPOLA

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sepulchre unto this day." There was something mysterious about the departure of Elijah, for whom there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire, which carried him up in a whirlwind into heaven. But Christ's departure differed from all of these. The phrases used to describe it are, "He was received up into heaven." "He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." "He was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight." But none of these phrases are meant, we believe, to imply that some agency was necessary for Christ's bodily elevation. He rose by His own will and power. He was "taken from them," but He "went up," to use the phrase in the book of the Acts of the Apostles. He went in the fulness of His power. He went as a King. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." He went as a conquering King—His battles over, His victories won; His life of humiliation, of conflict, of suffering, and of death for us sinners for ever ended; His life of glory as our mediatorial King entered upon. "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also,

that the Lord God might dwell among them."

This, then, was the aspect of Christ's person that struck the Venetians as revealed in the Ascension. They seem to have realised Him as a victorious sovereign. It is as a King that He is depicted in the height of the Ascension cupola. The rainbow He sits on is His throne. The rainbow beneath His feet is His footstool. The rainbow is the symbol of reconciliation, of God's anger being turned away, of His being propitious unto us, and so here it suggests Christ's finished propitiatory work by which He became our mediatorial King. The scroll in His hand is the law and word of His kingdom. And it was as a King that He claimed, as He ascended, universal sovereignty, a kingdom coextensive with all kingdoms, embracive of all kingdoms: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." It was as a King that He laid His mandate upon His disciples, "Go ye therefore and disciple all nations"—go and tell the inhabitants of the round world that I am their Sovereign, and make them My subjects by teaching them to know and observe all things, "whatsoever I have commanded you." And it was as a King that He promised to be with them even when departing from them:

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THE MAGI WORSHIPPING CHRIST

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"And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

In harmony, then, with this idea all the ceremonies and festivities of Ascension Day suggested sovereignty and conquest. The vessel in which the Doge sailed to wed the Adriatic Sea was not only a wedding coach, it was a naval car of victory, and the wedding itself was "in token of a true and perpetual dominion." The whole ceremony was a display of the naval supremacy of Venice as Queen of the Adriatic, as Mistress of the Seas.

In like manner the great fair in St. Mark's Square was an exhibition of the commercial supremacy of Venice, whose flag, in these centuries, like that of England to-day, was to be seen floating proudly in all waters. And the ceremony of the Magi presenting their gifts to the Infant Christ on the platform of the Clock Tower, which then, as now, never failed to draw the eyes of all in the Piazza below, served to remind them that Christ, who went from the world as a King, also came into the world as a King. He was born, not a prince, but a King. The keynote struck at His coming into the world was the same as that struck at His going out of it. He entered the world as a King, He was recognised as

such, even whilst lying a helpless babe in the manger at Bethlehem, and He left it as a King, in the fulness of His glorified humanity, as He ascended from the Mount of Olives.

Great facts are not given to us, great truths are not revealed to us, only for intellectual enjoyment, or as matters of contemplation and speculation, nor are they at all given to us as "moral opiates" and "spiritual charms." They are all given to us, to use the expressive words of the late Bishop Westcott, "for the inspiration of our whole being, and for the hallowing and bracing of every power outward and inward with which we are endowed, for use in the busy field of common duty." Yes, they are given to rouse us, to guide us, to sustain us, to help us onward and upward.

And thus it is with the great fact of the Ascension. And this idea the practical Venetians seized and embodied ceremonially and pictorially.

In the display of naval and commercial supremacy on Ascension Day there was an acknowledgment that all authority, national and individual, comes from Christ. All is a delegated authority. An acknowledgment which the Republic made in so many words when it replied to the pretensions of Pope

Paul V., through its great counsellor and statesman, Fra Paolo Sarpi: "We acknowledge no superior in civil matters but Him who has given us charge of the affairs of Venice." And all authority should return to Him, should be used for His glory, as the representation of the Magi offering their gifts seems to have been designed to suggest.

But this idea of receiving from Christ that one may give to Him again, the Venetians brought out specially in the Ascension cupola. If the kingship of Christ is there conspicuously portrayed, so is also the subject position of man. If, on the one hand, there is brought out Christ's right to rule, on the other hand there is brought out man's obligation to obey. And, therefore, the "two men in white," who are depicted as appearing in the midst of the apostles, address them in the words which are inscribed round the dome: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Christ, the Son of God, as He goes away, taken up from you, shall in like manner come, Arbiter of the world, invested with judgment, to give to men their just deserts." The words recalled the apostles from surprised contemplation to active work for Christ. In standing gazing upward after their Master, they were

in danger of forgetting His parting command to go and work for Him. The Ascension was not given them as a doctrine to speculate about, but as a fact and a power to influence their lives. And the angels' warning was heeded, and the lesson was learned. And this is what the Venetians designed to bring out by representing the four evangelists, in the spandrels of the cupola, engaged busily writing their respective Gospels. St. Matthew sits with his pen in his hand, and on the open pages of his book are the words: "*Liber generationis Iesu Christi filii David*" (The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David). St. Mark has written the opening words of his Gospel: "*Initium Evangelii Iesu Christi Filii Dei*" (The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God), when he pauses, and, placing his elbow on the open page, rests his head on his hand which holds his quill, as if engaged in profound thought. St. Luke has written the four verses that form the preface to his Gospel, and, turning the page, has begun his Gospel itself with the words: "*Fuit in diebus Herodis, regis Iudeæ, sacerdos quidam nomine Zacharias*" (There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judæa, a certain priest named Zacharias). St. John, like St. Mark, has paused as if

ST. LUKE WRITING HIS GOSPEL

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struck with a sense of the awful mystery of that life he was about to relate, when he had put down the sublime words with which he begins to tell it: "*In principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum*" (In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God).

The sixteen Virtues on the cupola walls teach the same lesson. They declare the life of Christians to be one of active virtuous doing, a life of holy activity for their King. As His subjects, they must serve Him in holiness and righteousness all the days of their lives. And the Virtues also show us how the Venetians expected this to be attained. As practical men, they clearly saw that a vague desire to be good and to do good was inadequate to the task. As practical men, they saw that their King was to be served, and the world was to be benefited, by each one applying himself diligently to the cultivation and practice of clearly defined individual virtues, even though it might be by the practice of only one at a time. The Virtues, as catalogued by the Venetians, are—Temperance, Understanding, Humility, Benignity, Compunction, Abstinence, Mercy,

Patience, Chastity, Moderation, Steadfastness, Love, Hope, Faith, Justice, and Fortitude.

Yes, Christ calls us to a life of activity, to the diligent pursuit of virtue in deeds of usefulness and benevolence. Christ wants His followers to imitate Himself, who went about continually doing good. He wants them to be active in obeying His commands. "Ye are my disciples if ye do whatsoever I command you." He wants them to be good soldiers, fighting manfully under His banner.

But His commands are not grievous, His service is not burdensome, "His yoke is easy and his burden is light." He left the world laying His mandate upon His followers to disciple it, but He blessed them as He commanded. His commands are blessings. And this fact, too, the Venetians recognised, and meant to teach by the scrolls inscribed with benedictions, which they placed in the hands of the figures of the Virtues. The texts are mainly taken from the Sermon on the Mount. We are commanded to practise and to acquire virtues—yes, but in so doing we win heavenly blessings. Is it Humility we are called upon to possess? It bears the text, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Is it Benignity? "Blessed are the

ST. JOHN WRITING HIS GOSPEL

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Not

meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Is it Compunction—contrition for sin? "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." Is it Mercy, kindness to the undeserving and unworthy? "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Is it Patience we are commanded to exercise? "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." Is it Steadfastness? "Blessed are they who suffer persecution for righteousness' sake." Is it Faith? "The just shall live by faith"—faith is life. Is it Justice? "The Lord loveth righteousness, the upright shall behold his face." Is it Endurance, Fortitude, that which Locke calls, "the guard and support of the other virtues"? "The Lord breaks the great teeth of the lions." It is the Lord who fighteth for us, and crowns endurance with victory.

But over and above the blessings which the practice of these virtues brings, our Lord promises His disciples the unspeakable blessing of Himself, of His own perpetual presence. "Lo! I am with you alway (all the days), even unto the end of the world. Amen." I, your King, wielding the sceptre of universal sovereignty, the possessor of all power in heaven and on earth, I am with you. Who,

therefore, can harm you? Who can pluck you out of My hand? "Lo! I am with you," why then be anxious? I, your Lord, am at hand, omnipotent, omniscient, knowing all your trials and difficulties, and contests, therefore "be anxious for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God," remembering My words: "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." "Lo! I am with you," who then can withstand you? The Christian life, as St. Paul describes it, and as he experienced it, is a triumphal progress. "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place." The realisation of the perpetual presence of Christ is what we need.

But, in order to possess Christ's presence we must be in the way of His commandments, we must be obeying Him. His presence is conditioned by obedience, by the practice of virtue, by the fulfilment of His behests. Christ does not say, "Lo! I am with you all the days: go ye therefore, and teach all nations;" but He says, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations: and, lo! I am with you alway (all the days),

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HUMILITY AND BENIGNITY

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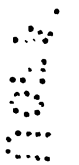


even unto the end of the world. Amen." Obey Me, and then you will find that I am with you, guiding you, helping you, crowning you with benedictions.

May all of us know Christ as our King. May we be His obedient, loving, happy subjects; and thus obeying Him here below, and rejoicing in a sense of His perpetual presence with us, look forward to His coming again, when He shall receive us unto Himself, into His own immediate presence, so that we shall be for ever with Him our Lord, for as He Himself has said, "Where I am, there shall also my servant be." "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory."

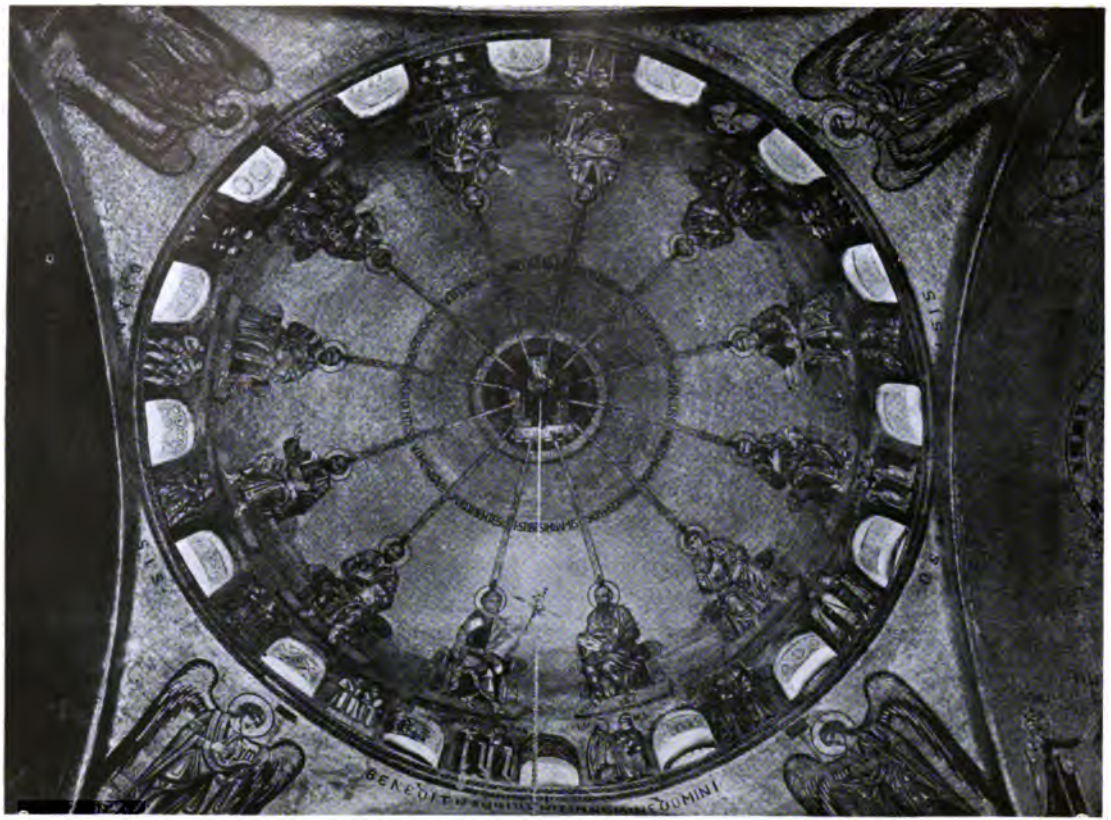
> "Grant that like as we do believe thy only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to have ascended into the heavens; so we may also in heart and mind thither ascend, and with him continually dwell."

X

PENTECOST

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you."

—John xvi. 13, 14.



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PENTECOST CUPOLA

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Not to

X

PENTECOST

"*And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*"—Acts ii. 4.

Last Sunday I directed our thoughts to the great historic fact of the Ascension, and I did so from the stand-point of the old Venetians, who realised, as no other people of that time seem to have done, its supreme importance—depicting it in beauty of line and figure and colour, and in fulness of detail in the main central cupola of St. Mark's Church; and making its commemoration on Ascension Day, and on the days immediately succeeding it, the most important religious and civil festival of the year.

To-day is Whitsunday or Pentecost, the day set apart by the Christian Church for the commemoration of the Descent of the Holy Spirit; and I wish this morning to consider that subject, and, in doing so, I wish to follow the plan I adopted last Sunday when considering the

Ascension, namely, to use for its elucidation and illustration whatever the Venetians have told us in ceremony or symbol of that great event.

The Venetians realised the Descent of the Holy Spirit to be a great historic fact in the Christian faith, such as they realised the Ascension to be, and so they have assigned it a correspondingly important position in St Mark's Church, and represented it with equal fulness and beauty. It fills the whole of the western cupola, the cupola of the nave, the first seen on entering the church. It is in close and visible contact with that of the Ascension, reminding us that the subject of the one has an intimate connection with the subject of the other, that the one, indeed, is the consequence of the other. It is because Jesus ascended that the Holy Spirit came. Hence, commenting on one of our Lord's discourses, St. John says, "The Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." And hence, too, our Saviour said, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."

And in what sense did the Holy Spirit come after Christ's Ascension? Was He not in the world before that event? Let us look at the

Pentecostal cupola and we shall get the answer. In the utmost height of it the Holy Spirit is represented as a pure white Dove, behind the head of which there is a golden disk, or nimbus. The Dove is enthroned. Beneath it there is a richly ornamented, richly cushioned and apparelled royal seat. We are thus taught that the Holy Spirit came as a Divine Person, the Third Person of the Glorious Trinity. Before Pentecost the Holy Spirit was present and operative in the world, but it was as an influence, an inflatus, an inspiration. He was known rather as an impersonal Divine energy than as a self-conscious, self-acting Divine Being. But at Pentecost, after our Lord's exaltation and glorification, a fuller revelation of the Holy Ghost was given than had ever been given before, for He was revealed as a Divine Person.

Again, when we look up at the Pentecostal dome, we seem to be looking up at a great fountain. Jets of water shoot forth from the throne and stream down upon the apostles, who are represented sitting in a circle round the base of the cupola. These jets of water represent the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the representation is in accordance with Scripture teaching, for in St. John's Gospel we

read: "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." And John adds: "This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive." But now Christ was glorified, and the promise of the giving of the Holy Spirit, foretold under the symbol of water, was fulfilled. Indeed the Venetians had all this in their minds, for not only have they represented the Descent of the Holy Spirit as jets of water streaming in all directions from the throne, as from a fountain, but part of the inscription written above it says: "*Spiritus in flammis, super hos distillat ut amnis.*" ("The Spirit in flames, distils itself upon them like a river.") By this then we are taught that, whilst under the Old Testament dispensation the Holy Spirit came but to a few—to a few prophets, judges, kings, leaders, and to a few artisans, like Bezaleel and his companions—now, under the New Testament dispensation, the Holy Spirit comes to all. As the Apostle Peter told the multitude, the prophecy of Joel was fulfilled at Pentecost. "I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." The Holy Spirit

TONGUE OF FIRE ON APOSTLE'S HEAD

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comes to all everywhere, surrounding them, enveloping them, or filling them, as the air fills a room or the lungs of a living man. "Suddenly," we read, "there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting . . . And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." At Pentecost, the Dispensation of the Spirit, under which we live, was inaugurated. At Pentecost, our Saviour fulfilled His Ascension promise: "Lo! I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the world," for leaving the world at His Ascension, and ceasing to be locally, corporeally present with a few, He returned at Pentecost in the person of the Holy Spirit, free from all the limitations of place and time, to be present at all times, in all places, in all circumstances, with all His people.

And what was the mission of the Holy Spirit? To testify of Christ, to reveal Christ, to make known Christ's character, to interpret Christ's words and deeds. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth. . . . He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father . . . he shall testify of me." And so, in harmony with this

mission of the Holy Spirit, the Dove is represented in the Pentecostal cupola, as not resting directly on the throne, but on a large golden-clasped Bible, which is placed upon its cushioned seat. That is to say, the Bible is placed on the throne, and the Spirit, as a Dove, rests upon it. It is the Bible that testifies of Christ. He is its sum and substance, from Genesis to Revelation. But it is the Spirit that inspired its writing: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." And it is the Spirit that interprets it. The Bible under the Dove's feet is closed, showing that it is a sealed book to all without His guidance and teaching. He is "the Spirit of truth," who guides "into all truth."

The mission of the Holy Spirit is further enforced in the Pentecostal cupola by each apostle being there represented with a book or a scroll in his hand. Pentecost, under the Jewish dispensation, was the anniversary of the giving of the Law from Mount Sinai, and it was the custom of the Jews to commemorate the event by the reading and study of their Scriptures. We may therefore suppose that the apostles and disciples were so engaged when the Holy Spirit came as their teacher.

Hitherto they had failed to understand what their prophets and the psalmist had written of Christ, as they had failed to recognise Him as their Messiah when He sojourned with them. But the Holy Spirit came to them as the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ. Instantly their ideas regarding Him were corrected and enlarged. They received spiritual discernment to understand Christ's true character and work as the Messiah of Old Testament type and symbol and prophecy—as the Saviour of the world. Our Saviour's words were fulfilled, "But the Paraclete, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

An old English poem of the fourteenth century has come down to us, and in it the writer makes the name Whitsunday to be a contraction, or corruption, of Witsunday, or Wisdom Sunday. He says:—

> "This day Whitsunday is cald,
> For wisdom and wit seven fald,
> Was given to the apostles on the day."

Whether the derivation is correct or not, Whitsunday was a true Wit-sunday, a true

Wisdom Sunday to the apostles. May it be also such to us! And that this may be the case we ought to occupy ourselves in the reading and study of the Holy Scriptures. It is generally when men are so engaged that the Holy Spirit comes to them. It was so, as we have seen, with the apostles. It was so with the Ethiopian nobleman. He was reading aloud, as he returned in his chariot from worshipping at Jerusalem, the book of the prophet Isaiah, when the Holy Spirit joined Himself to him in the person of the evangelist Philip, and taught him to find Christ in what he read. If we are to be taught of the Spirit, let us read the Spirit's book. The Spirit reveals Christ, but it generally is through the Bible, which testifies of Him. If we are diligent and earnest in studying the Scriptures, even if we do not understand some of the things we read, the Holy Spirit will sooner or later come to us as our teacher, to lead us into all truth, and to teach us all things.

But in this matter the old Venetians realised that it was not so much to the minds of the apostles that the Spirit directed His teaching, as to their hearts. It is "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." The Bible

ELAMITES WHO HEARD THE GOSPEL IN THEIR OWN TONGUE

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presents Christ to us as a person to be loved, and does not simply tell us facts about Him to be intellectually believed. The Holy Spirit reveals Christ by causing us to love Him. Hence the Venetians have inscribed, circling round the dome above the apostles, these beautiful and significant words, the opening clause of which I have already quoted :—

"*Spiritus in flammis,*
Super hos distillat ut amnis,
Corda replens munit,
Et amoris nexibus unit,
Hinc variæ gentes
Miracula conspicientes
Fuint credentes
Vim linguæ percipientes."

("The Spirit in flames distils upon them like a river; filling the heart it strengthens it, and unites it with the bands of love; hence various nations, beholding the miracles, are made believers, perceiving the strength of the tongues.") As this inscription teaches, it is not cold abstract intellectual knowledge of the truth that the Holy Spirit communicates, but that warm knowledge of Christ as a person which fills the heart, strengthening it and uniting it to Him with the bands of love.

The representation in the Pentecostal Dome also reminds us of that which this narrative so prominently brings before us, namely, that the Holy Spirit not only taught the apostles concerning Christ, but gave them power to communicate that knowledge. On the head of each of the apostles there is depicted a red tongue of fire, as we read, "there appeared unto them cloven tongues," parting asunder, or distributing themselves among them, "like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them."

These tongues were the symbols, visible to others, of the power they had received to bear witness for Christ, and instantly they began to use it—they "began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." And, as the discourse which St. Peter delivered on this occasion shows, they preached, not about Christ, but Christ Himself—Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah of Old Testament type and prophecy, the Saviour of the world, who died and rose again, and ascended to God's right hand. And they received power to witness for Christ, not only by their tongues, but by their pens. I believe that it will be found that wherever the apostles went they translated their teaching into the language of the country, and left thus a permanent record

of it with their converts. As St. Peter says in his second epistle: "Moreover, I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance. For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty."

And this aspect of the Spirit's mission is also symbolised by the books and the scrolls which the apostles are represented as holding in their hands. They possessed the Jewish Scriptures, they were enabled to give to the Church and the world the Christian Scriptures. By tongue and by pen they were enabled to communicate the knowledge which they themselves had been taught by the Holy Ghost.

It is so always. We receive that we may give. The Holy Spirit teaches us that He may use us to teach others. The Spirit teaches through the Bible, but He also teaches by means of men. I remember what Mr. Ruskin once said to me here in Venice, when I was speaking of the invaluable character of his books: "Remember," he said, "that it is not the printed page, it is the living voice that touches the human heart." May we be all taught of God by His Holy Spirit, and be

given tongues to speak, and actions to testify of His Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Turning again to the Pentecost cupola, we see beneath the apostles' feet, on the wall spaces between the windows of the dome, figures representing the different nations—sixteen in number—which heard spoken in their own tongues "the wonderful works of God." Each nation is represented by two figures, one that of a man and the other that of a woman, dressed in the costume characteristic of the country to which they belong, the name of which is inscribed over their heads. The order in which they are set round the cupola is that in which they occur in the book of Acts: Parthia, Media, Elam, Mesopotamia, Judæa, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Libya, Cyrene, Rome, Crete, Arabia.

By this we are taught that the Gospel is a Gospel for all, meeting equally the needs of all, independently of race, sex, climate, and intellectual condition, overstepping all national boundaries, all racial differences, all social distinctions, fitting into the needs of the human heart everywhere, a universal religion, a religion for all mankind, demanding an "obedince of faith among all nations."

CRETES AND ARABIANS WHO HEARD THE GOSPEL IN THEIR OWN TONGUE

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And this is one of the unique features of Christianity. No other religion that has ever appeared on earth has manifested this adaptation. All others are local and national, or if not national, yet distinctly circumscribed and bounded by conditions they cannot overstep. It is so with Buddhism, it is so with Mohammedanism, which, flourishing in the East, can never take root in the West. But our historic faith, summed up in the person and work of Jesus Christ—Christianity which is Christ—meets equally the needs of the sinner the world over, delivering him from the bondage of corruption, and making him what he was originally designed to be—a child of God. "I am the door, and by me if *any* man enter in, he shall be saved and find pasture."

And this adaptation to meet the needs of all obliterates those secondary differences that separate man from man, in the creation of a deeper unity. All men and all women become in the highest sense one in Christ. Hence the Apostle Paul says that in Christ Jesus "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all" (Col. iii. 11).

And this fact the Venetians have also

expressed in the words written round the dome, already quoted:—

"*Corda replens munit*
Et amoris nexibus unit"

("Filling the heart, it strengthens it, and unites it with the bands of love").

Let us notice in closing how the preaching of the Gospel was followed by conversions, and the converted were made holy and happy in the Lord.

The word was received with gladness, and there were added unto the Church about three thousand souls, and "all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people." The Gospel by the Holy Spirit's aid was the power of God, and the wisdom of God unto salvation. The instruments of preaching seemed feeble—unlettered Galilean fishermen. So feeble did they seem that we read the people "were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another,

Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans?" Yet the great work of raising dead souls to life was done.

When the engineers and workmen were closing up the last plates of the great iron bridge that crosses the river Forth at Queensferry, near Edinburgh, they found that they could not make the rivet-holes come together, so as to permit them to drive home the bolts. All the hydraulic power they could bring to bear could not do it. Great fires, too, were kindled so as to expand the iron, but still a space of three-eighths of an inch separated hole from hole. "But," to quote the words of a newspaper report, "that night a soft south wind blew, and what the hydraulic jack could not accomplish with a pressure of a hundred and thirty tons, its genial influence, combined with that of the morning rays of the sun, successfully achieved. The huge fabric of steel expanded under the unseen but potent influences of a mild November morning, the rivet-holes of the plates came opposite each other, and the bolts were driven home."

It is the warm rays of Him who is the Sun of Righteousness, combined with the genial influence of the Holy Spirit, that softens and

expands the hard heart of man. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

Conversion means to-day what it meant at that Pentecostal time—holiness and peace and joy; because the defiling and disturbing element of sin is taken away, and the believer's wants and aspirations are all met in Christ. The world begins to wear a new aspect to him. Life is changed, is transfigured for him. "Monotony of work" no longer means, to use a phrase of the late Bishop of Durham, "Monotony of life." The believer is made holy, and he is made happy, for these two elements ever go together.

On the spandrels of the Pentecostal cupola are four angels. Each one bears a *labarum*, or banner. On those carried by the three first angels are inscribed the letters S.C.S. (*sanctus*); and on that of the fourth D.N.S. (*Dominus*). Then, above them, round the dome, are the words: *Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sun tcæli et terra gloria tua. Hosanna in excelsis. Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. Hosanna in excelsis.* ("Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth, Heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in

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the highest.") Thus the *Trisagion*, the *Tersanctus*, the Thrice Holy, one of the oldest of the Greek doxologies, echoes round the dome, the song of the individual believer, the song of the redeemed Church on earth, the prelude to the song of the redeemed Church in heaven.

May it be the song of our hearts, the outcome of the purity and peace and joy that we feel knowing Jesus as our Saviour, and in making Him known unto others, through the indwelling in our hearts of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus, the great Teacher, the great Sanctifier, the great Inspirer of life, the great Giver of faith and peace and joy.

XI

ALL SAINTS' DAY

" After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."

—Rev. vii. 9, 10.

BRIDGE OF BOATS TO THE CAMPO SANTO

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XI

ALL SAINTS' DAY

"*Followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*"—Heb. vi. 12.

The Festival of All Saints, which falls to be observed to-day, November 1st, is one of the oldest, not only in the calendar of the Christian Church, but in the written or unwritten calendar of any people. This is accounted for by the fact that the thoughts that underlie it, the feelings that prompt it, such as remembrance of the dead, commemoration of the dead, reverence for the dead, worship of the dead, fellowship with the dead, and even fear of the dead, are amongst the first forms in which the instinct of religion manifests itself. The mystery of death, the desire to establish a friendly fellowship with the spirits of the departed, are felt even by the lowest savages, and often prompts them to make the grave an altar of propitiation.

In the Christian Church this festival, as the name implies, is designed to commemorate all

departed saints. And by saints we mean all who possessed a share of Christ's saintliness, all who here below led consecrated lives. The term includes not only those who were conspicuous for their holiness, but all in whom the life of Christ was made manifest, whether in high station, and in the use made of many talents, and of vast means; or in humble station, and in the use made of few talents, amid poverty and suffering.

In observing it we come not only to the glorious company of the apostles, to the goodly fellowship of the prophets, and to the noble army of martyrs, but to "the heavenly Jerusalem . . . to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven . . . and to the spirits of just men made perfect," in order that we, recalling the lineaments of Christ's likeness which they exhibited in their characters and lives here below, may be enabled the better to grow up unto that divine likeness.

We possess evidence of the antiquity of this festival of All Saints in the works of St. Chrysostom and St. Gregory, both of whom, writing in the fourth century, make mention of it. Its formal recognition in the Latin Church is supposed to date from the year 610, when the Pantheon at Rome, dedicated originally, as the

name indicates, to "All the gods," was dedicated by Pope Boniface IV. to "All the saints."

Until the year 834, the date of its observance seems to have been sometimes May 1st and sometimes November 1st, but since that year it has only been observed on the latter date. The festival was formally introduced into England in 870, and the Church retained it in the calendar at the Reformation, as was done by most of the Reformed Churches. Its old name was All Hallows, and the day was called Hallowmas. In Scotland it is still known by that name, although there the festival has nothing to do with the Church, but is a convivial remembrance of the old Celtic festival of Belein, the god of fire.

The Festival of All Saints, though it conducts us to the cemetery and the tomb, is not necessarily a gloomy festival. Previous to the coming of Christ it was so. The funerals of the Greeks and Romans were frequently conducted by night, and the mourners who accompanied them carried cypresses in token of sorrow and defeat, because they believed that when the grave closed over their dead, it ended all. Thus a Greek poet speaks of the withered flowers in his garden reviving with the breath of spring, whilst no requickening ever visited

those who slept in death; and the Latin poet Catullus, whose home was at Verona, and at olive-clad Sirmione on the Lake of Garda, says, that when suns set, they rise again, but man, when his brief day is over, sinks into an eternal night. But at the coming of Christ all was changed. He brought "life and immortality to light through the gospel." And hence, amongst the early Christians, funerals were always conducted by day, and those who followed them carried palms and olive boughs in token of victory and joy. Not only so, but the very road along which the procession moved, as well as the grave itself, was strewn with flowers, whilst the processionists chanted psalms and hymns of triumph. These customs have come down in part to the present day, and were observed almost unimpaired in the time of Washington Irving, as is shown by the following lines from his pen:—

"White his shroud as the mountain snow,
Larded all with sweet flowers;
Which be-wept to the grave did go
With true love showers.
Thus, and thus, and thus we compass round,
The harmless and unhaunted ground,
And as we sing thy dirge, we will the daffodil,
And other flowers, lay upon
The altar of our love, thy stone."

In the early centuries, too, the cross never bore the figure of a dead Christ. There were no "crucifixes." There were crosses, but they were the symbols of victory. The early Fathers said: "Christ reigned from the tree." They realised, what we need ever to realise, that death is an act done by a living man.

In like manner all early Christian art is joyous. As the late Bishop Westcott has said: "Early Christian art is always joyous. In spite of appearances the Christian believed that the victory over sin and death was already won, and he gave expression to his conviction."

I have no means of knowing exactly how funerals were conducted in Venice in the early centuries of its history, but the many tombs that still exist, which date from that period, all bear witness to the same spirit of Christian joy and triumph. These tombs are to be seen in St. Mark's Church, and in the Frari, called the Pantheon of Venice, and in SS. Giovanni and Paolo, called its Westminster Abbey. They are all sarcophagi, and are set unobtrusively away against the walls, sometimes not inside the church at all, but in its atrium, as in St. Mark's, or in niches in the wall outside, as at SS. Giovanni and Paolo. They are of plain construction, with but little decoration,

free, on the one hand, from anything suggesting "pride of life," and on the other from anything suggesting "fear of death." "Rock tombs," Mr. Ruskin calls them. And what carving there is, consisting generally of an Annunciation and a cross, and not unfrequently of a figure of Christ before which he whose tomb it is kneels, was chosen with a definite purpose, namely, to show that the hope of the deceased was in the birth and death of Christ, through whom he had "fought a good fight" and had finished his course, and had left the field, not a captive in the grasp of death, but a conqueror over it, able to join with St. Paul in his pæan of victory, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Venice has but one cemetery, one burying-ground, one *Campo Santo*, as it is called, and it is outside the city altogether, in San Michele, an island in the northern lagoon that looks towards the Dolomite Mountains. No burying takes place within the city. Like the widow of Nain's son, like Lazarus, like our Lord Himself, its dead are all carried outside the city

C. Naya Photo

CHURCH OF THE CAMPO SANTO

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gates. But this dates only from recent times. From its foundation down to the fall of the Republic, the dead were buried in the *campos* or little fields in front of the churches. These are now simply paved squares, they were originally the parish churchyards. Indeed the *campo* of the Church of San Simeone Piccolo is still called *Campo Santo*, and, but a few months ago, when the pavement of the Campo San Moisè, near St. Mark's Square, was taken up, and the ground disturbed for the purpose of rectifying the drainage, I myself saw abundant proof that it had been a churchyard. Burials also took place in the narrow borders of ground that generally encircle churches. These are now paved lanes, but the word *sacrum* inscribed on them shows that they were once consecrated ground, and indeed one strip of land attached to the Church of San Salvatore, at the head of the Merceria, near the Rialto, still lies in its original condition.

It is curious to think what Venice must have been when everywhere such open burying-places obtruded themselves in the sight of its busy, bustling merchants and traders, and of its idly-busy pleasure-seekers. Perhaps the effect was salutary as a *memento mori*, and also as a silent, persuasive, and abiding incentive

to work. But for obvious reasons such burying-grounds were most objectionable, and so Napoleon the Great, to whom Venice is indebted for many reforms, caused them all to be closed, and ordered the Venetians to make the island of San Cristoforo, which lay next that of San Michele, the necropolis of the city. Strangely enough, this island had been used by the Protestants of Venice as their cemetery for a hundred years before Napoleon's day, for they received it for this purpose from the Republic of Venice in 1718. In 1813 Napoleon's orders were carried out, and for the next thirteen years Protestants and Roman Catholics alike found on San Cristoforo their last resting-place. In 1826, however, the island became inadequate for the city's needs, so the adjacent island of San Michele was joined to it by the filling up of the narrow canal that separated them. As this latter was the bigger island, the name of the lesser, San Cristoforo, was gradually dropped, and the whole united island became known as San Michele, which, as I have said, is now the sole *Campo Santo* of Venice. Another enlargement of it will soon have to be made, as its sleeping inhabitants now outnumber by six to one the living ones of the city.

For the Venetians, one part of the observance of All Saints' Day, and an essential part of it, is to go on pilgrimage to the *Campo Santo*. To relieve gondola and steamboat congestion, and to enable the poorer people to go in great numbers and without expense, the Venetian Municipality construct a bridge of boats from the nearest part of the city—the Fondamenta Nuova—to the island, a distance of about half a mile. On this day, then, the silent island of the dead is all astir with the presence of the city's thousands. The spectacle of men and women, aged and young, rich and poor, moving amongst the graves and tombs, walking over the dust of their friends, and kneeling upon the ashes of their relatives in a fellowship of suffering and of hope, is strange and touching, and deeply suggestive.

If All Saints' Day has any lessons to teach us, it is here we can best learn them.

(1) I referred at the beginning of my discourse to the happy view the Christians in the early centuries took of their dead, regarding them as conquerors, and strewing their path to the grave with flowers. The appearance of the island of San Michele on All Saints' Day recalls the spirit and customs of that time. In England burying-places are always more or

less like flower-gardens, the grounds being beautifully laid out, and the graves all tenderly cared for. But in Italy it is not so. Italian burial-grounds are generally neglected spots, where the vegetation grows rank and repulsive. San Michele forms no exception to this statement. During the greater part of the year it is unvisited and untended. But on All Saints' Day its appearance is changed. The multitudes that throng it break themselves up into groups; each group seeks out the graves of its own relatives, which they begin at once to put in order by cutting down and rooting up all rank grasses and weeds. They then dress and decorate them with plants, wreaths, and garlands, and light them up with lamps and candles. The whole place becomes transformed. It puts on "beauty for ashes, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." It adds emphasis to the apostle's exhortation that we should not sorrow for our dead "as others which have no hope." Our dead live. Death is for them the very condition of an amplified and a glorified life. They that have died have entered into life.

It is to be regretted that San Michele does not wear its bright All Saints' Day aspect throughout the year, and that the beauty of

DECORATING THE GRAVES AT THE CAMPO SANTO

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other Italian cemeteries is also spasmodic and ephemeral. Though few people now, like Joseph, give commandment concerning their bones, still every tomb ought to be cared for. There need be nothing of idolatry in this, but only an expression of reverence for the body which God made, and which He in Christ has taken to Himself; and for the grave, which God Himself in some wonderful way formed for his servant Moses, and which Christ has for ever consecrated by His death and burial.

(2) Regarding our dead as conquerors, we are led to think of them as crowned. The Apostle Paul, referring to the struggle and fighting of the Christians here below, says that whilst others strive to obtain a corruptible crown, they do it to obtain an incorruptible. And speaking of his own life's struggle, he says: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." And St. James says: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." St. Peter also says: "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive

a crown of glory that fadeth not away." And our Lord Himself said, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." All Christians who die as conquerors, are thus crowned, whether it be after a long or after a brief campaign. We sometimes speak of an incomplete life, but no life, however short, is incomplete that has been lived in Christ. No, not even if, so far as appearances went, it were unsuccessful as well as brief. Otherwise the lives of many of God's children, such as those of Abel and Enoch, Elijah and Josiah, and of the youthful martyr Stephen, were incomplete; otherwise, even of the life of our Lord Himself, the same might be said. One may sow and another may reap, but all ultimately are crowned in Christ, so "that he that soweth, and he that reapeth, may rejoice together." "As his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike."

(3) In Venice the bulk of the people are too poor to own vaults or graves of their own, so that they are buried in common ground. A great part of the island thus consists of "the graves of the common people," and as these are turned over afresh every ten years, we see in this *Campo Santo* what we do not see in our

own native land, large ossuaries or charnel-houses. In looking at these we naturally think of the question in Ezekiel's vision, "Can these bones live?" and of how, when Ezekiel had prophesied, as an answer "there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone . . . and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them . . . and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army." We think of the resurrection, that the grave is not an eternal prison-house, that our bodies there "rest in hope," that a day is coming when "they that sleep in the dust shall wake," when "He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken our mortal bodies." We love to think that even now the waters of eternal life are rolling onward toward this and all "God's acres," in as full and free a volume as those of the Adriatic Sea that are being borne inward by the rushing spring-tide. We love to think of Christ's second coming, at whose girdle hang "the keys of hell and of death," who is in Himself to all His people "the Resurrection and the Life," when He "shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God," and

when "the dead in Christ shall rise first," when this mortal shall put on immortality, when, as the seed gives us more than we sowed, gives us green leaf and coloured flower and sweet fruit, so this body, sown as the body of our humiliation, shall rise transformed into the body of our glory. Then body and spirit, the two essential parts of our manhood, separated for a time, shall once more be reunited, and we shall be "for ever with the Lord."

(4) Lastly, we are led to think of what is implied in that phrase, which was added to the Apostles' Creed in the eighth century, the "Communion of Saints." We are led to think of all saints "knit together in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body" of Jesus Christ, our Lord. To the eye of sense a gulf seems to separate the living from the dead, but to the eye of faith no such gulf exists. They who have died are united to each other, and also to us, for we form the one great family of the redeemed.

> "O blest communion, fellowship Divine!
> We feebly struggle, they in glory shine;
> Yet all are one in Thee, for all are Thine."

It is an ennobling thought to belong to a great family, to a great society, to a great nation, let us then realise the nobility of our

being "fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." The late Bishop Westcott seemed to believe in a ministration of angels through the phenomena of nature and the operations of natural law, and he quotes a distinguished physiologist as saying, "I can see nothing in all nature but the loving acts of spiritual beings." Whether we believe in the service of angels rendered after such a fashion or not, we yet do believe, with St. Paul, that they are "all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation," and that their interest and sympathy with us in our trials and struggles here below cannot be greater than that of the redeemed who form the great encompassing cloud of witnesses, of which St. Paul also speaks, who testify to the power of faith to enable us to overcome the world, even as it enabled them to overcome it. Let us thus enter into the "Communion of Saints"; and to give point and directness to our meditation that it may be the more profitable unto us, let us not be content to call up in memory the names of great spiritual heroes—patriarchs, judges, apostles, confessors, martyrs, "all that chivalry of fire," but let each call up in his own mind the names and lives of saintly ones

he has known in his own family and household, and within the circle of his friends, and seek to allow the influence of their characters to permeate his own. Thus may our commemoration of All Saints' Day stimulate us to increased zeal and energy in Christ's service, that we may be found "not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises," so that we too may become conquerors, and obtain a name and a place in the New Jerusalem above, where God sets "the solitary in families," and where "the inhabitant shall not say I am sick," where "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

"O God of Saints, to Thee we cry;
O Saviour, plead for us on high;
O Holy Ghost, our Guide and Friend,
Grant us Thy grace till life shall end,—
That with all Saints our rest may be
In that bright Paradise with Thee."

XII

THE OLIVE TREE

"The Lord called thy name, A green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit."—Jer. xi. 16.

AN OLIVE GROVE AND OLIVE MILL

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XII

THE OLIVE TREE

"*But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God.*"—PSALM lii. 8.

IN a beautiful passage about trees, Mr. Ruskin, paraphrasing Milton, says, "Trees, which, as in sacred dance, make the borders of the river glad with their procession and the mountain ridges statelier with their pride, are all expressions of the vegetative power in its accomplished felicities; gathering themselves into graceful companionship with the fairest arts and serenest life of man; and providing, not only the sustenance and the instruments, but also the lessons and the delights of that life, in perfectness of order, and unblighted fruition of season and time."

Perhaps the truths thus expressed were suggested to Mr. Ruskin by the association of trees with man in sacred history. Anyhow his words exactly express what we find in Scripture. In Genesis we read that, "the

Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." And in Revelation we read of the "tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." And in harmony with these passages, that occur in the opening chapter of the Jewish Scriptures, and in the closing chapter of the Christian Scriptures wherever trees are mentioned, throughout the whole Bible, they are associated with human life, with its successes and failures, its joys and sorrows, its hopes and disappointments, and above all, with man's ruin by the Fall, and his redemption by Jesus Christ.

And of the different trees of the Scriptures, no one, not even the vine, the emblem of our Lord Himself—for which tree the olive has a great affinity—is more frequently mentioned, or more honourably mentioned than the olive. It is associated, too, with the sufferings of our

Lord in a peculiar manner. The Mount of Olives was to a certain extent His home. There He passed nights in prayer amongst the seclusion of the trees. The olives of Gethsemane—which word means oil press—were the witnesses of His agony. The Mount of Olives is associated with His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and with the prediction of the overthrow of that city. It is associated with His Ascension. It was from that mount that He ascended up, as a King, to where He was before.

This tree, then, of such hallowed associations is the tree spoken of in our text. It is the tree to which David metaphorically compares himself. In using this metaphor he bids us see the characteristics of the olive tree exemplified in himself. "I am like a green olive tree in the house of God."

Does the language sound self-complacent? I think not, if we observe that he adds immediately "in the house of God. I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever." It is not because of what he is in himself that he is a green olive tree, but because of his connection with God—a connection granted to him in mercy. Mercy is kindness bestowed upon the undeserving, upon those who can

advance no claim for its bestowment. There is therefore here a confession of personal unworthiness, and a tracing up of all he is and has to God's loving-kindness and tender mercy. Indeed it shows the strength of David's faith that he could use this metaphor in the circumstances in which he was placed. For, as the explanatory words at the beginning of the Psalm, which form really its first verse, show us, the occasion of his writing it was when Doeg the Edomite went and told Saul of his having seen David at Nob, in the house of Ahimelech the priest, who had given him bread and the sword of Goliath. Saul immediately sent for Ahimelech, and having slain him and all the priests, eighty-five persons, set out, with a great multitude of men, in pursuit of David. David was therefore at this time a poor fugitive, being hunted like a partridge in the mountains, living among "the rocks of the wilderness," and hiding "in dens and caves of the earth." Yet his faith was such that even in these dark days of trouble and peril he could say, in contrast to the fate of the godless, whom, he tells us in the fifth verse, God would pluck up and root out of the land of the living, "But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God."

We will now consider some of the chief characteristics of the olive tree, which found their counterpart in the character and life of David, and which should also be exemplified in those of all Christians. These characteristics must be more or less familiar to all of us, because Italy, in which we are now travelling and sojourning, is the greatest olive-growing country in Europe. In its southern provinces, in Tuscany, and along the Riviera there are millions of acres devoted to its cultivation, and here in Venice the names of streets, quays, bridges, and even that of an entire island, recall the fact that olive trees once grew in these lagoons, and that olive oil was a staple article of Venetian commerce and export. The island of Castello, where the old cathedral of Venice stands, was originally called Olivolo, because of its groves of olives, and to this day there is the *Ponte dell' Olio*, the *Calle dell' Olio*, and *Riva dell' Olio*. Venice thus associates itself with the subject of our study.

(1) *The first characteristic of the olive tree which I will speak of is its evergreenness.*—The evergreenness of the olive tree is referred to expressly in the text, "I am like a *green* olive tree." All trees are clothed in green, but most of them only for a part of the year.

They put on their freshly woven green mantle in the spring-time, but they put it off again in the autumn, and stand shivering, stripped and bare, in the cold blast during the long winter months. But it is not so with the olive tree. It stands always "robed in living green." Its leaves are neither burned up by summer's heat, nor withered by winter's cold. It sheds its leaves, it is true, but it does so gradually. As some fall off, others come on, so the change is imperceptible to the eye, and the tree is ever green, ever leafy, ever flourishing, ever full. "It has no sorrow in its note, no winter in its year." The very life of the tree is in its leaf. According to Mr. Ruskin, "The leaves are the tree itself;" by them "it breathes and lives." The botanist says, "The leaf is an expansion of the bark of the stem;" more accurately Mr. Ruskin says, "The bark is a contraction of the tissue of the leaf, for every leaf is born out of the earth, and breathes into the air. The trunk is a bundle of leaf fibres." The falling leaf, then, the autumnal leaf, such as those that strew "the brooks of Vallombrosa," may be the emblem of human decay—"we all do fade as a leaf," but the evergreen leaf, whether on the tree, or woven into a crown on the victors' brows, is the emblem of life, of enduring life.

And so, when David applies this metaphor to himself, he avows his belief in the reality and the security, and the enduring character of his life in God's hands. He virtually says, "I have life, and I have an unending life." It is not evanescent, it will not pass away. My life is evergreen, it will last on and on. He expresses the same thought in that psalm of psalms, the First Psalm, where he says the godly man "shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

In being at peace with God, in holding fellowship with God, in serving God, David possessed an unending life. "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore."

And this similitude of a green olive tree, applied by David to himself, is applied by God to all His people. "The Lord called thy name, a green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit."

If David then, and God's people, in that far back time, realised the fact here symbolised by the figure of the text, how much more should the Christian? "In Christ" he is joined to the fountain of life. It has been truly said

"there is no wealth but life," and this is the wealth Christ came to give. It was His very mission to bring life into our dead and dying souls. "I am come that ye might have life, and have it more abundantly." "I am the way, the truth, and the life." "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." In Christ we live now, and shall go on living for ever. The Christian's leaf is fadeless, ever green, ever flourishing. He goes from strength to strength, from life to life—his faculties and powers, not only knowing no extinction or suspension, but growing continually in capacity and activity. Death is the goal, the winning-post, at which he, the victor, receives as a prize from the hand of our Lord Himself, not "a crown," but "the crown of life" (Rev. ii. 20).

(2) *The second characteristic of the olive tree to be noticed is its fruitfulness.*—It is not often that an evergreen tree produces fruit at all. Only a few do so, and the olive is one of them. And it not only produces fruit, but it produces an abundance of fruit. It is rich in fruit. Indeed, it is said to be one of the richest trees God has made. Many of us, I daresay, have

seen its branches weighed down with berries—each tiny twig bearing the dark, oblong fruit, with its soft blue bloom. In the parable of Jothan, related in the ninth chapter of Judges, this feature of the olive tree, its rich fruitfulness, is spoken of. "The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us. But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?" Likewise St. Paul, in the eleventh chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, in his parable about the bringing in of the Gentiles, speaks of the "root and fatness of the olive tree."

The olive tree does not bear a full crop of fruit every season, nor is every crop alike good; a very good crop may alternate with a comparatively poor one, but, taking one season with another, its average crop is greater than that of any other tree. The value of the crop of an olive tree often exceeds the value of a good forest timber tree—for example, a good fir tree is worth fifteen shillings or a pound, but the crop of an olive tree is often worth two pounds; so one tree is thus equal to a capital of about fifty pounds.

The fruitfulness of the olive tree is thus one of its marked characteristics. And it is fruitful though growing in the poorest soil. It will flourish where hardly anything else will —living and thriving in barren ground. And this struggle for life improves the quality of its life, just as the battling with difficulties does in all departments of life in the vegetable, and animal, and spiritual worlds. In the case of the olive the berry is enhanced in delicacy of flavour. The olive will literally "bring us oil out of the flinty rock," and all the better oil that it has to work hard in the process. And not only is the olive a fruitful tree, but it will continue from year to year, from age to age, fruitful. It is a long-lived tree, like the vine, and, like the vine, it never becomes unfruitful. Some olive trees are known to have lived for five, six, and even seven centuries, with undiminished fruitfulness. "They shall still bring forth fruit in old age."

In like manner the life of David was characterised by fruitfulness. Personally he was richly endowed. *He was a Poet.* Although he did not write all the psalms in this precious manual of devotion which has come down the centuries, and which is the heritage of the Universal Church to-day, he wrote at

"THEY SHALL STILL BRING FORTH FRUIT IN OLD AGE"

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least half of the collection. He was emphatically *the* Psalmist. *He was a Musician.* He was at the first recommended to King Saul by his servants as a man who could play cunningly on the harp. He was "the sweet singer of Israel." *He was a great Soldier*, a great military genius. These same servants of King Saul spoke in praise of him as "a mighty valiant man, and a man of war." His exploits and his campaigns read like a romance. *He was a Statesman.* It was said of him, before he entered Saul's service, that he was "prudent in matters," and, after Saul took him, that he "behaved himself wisely in all his ways," and that he "behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul, so that his name was much set by." And all through his after career he displayed great political tact and wisdom. Lastly, *he was a Sovereign*, and the greatest Sovereign, as Moses was the greatest lawgiver, the kingdom of Israel ever knew. Indeed, David created the kingdom of Israel. Before the reign of his predecessor Saul, it was, if not exactly what Italy was before the Sixties, "a geographical expression," yet, like Italy of the past, it was a mere congeries of states and tribes, divided from each other by rancours and jealousies. And even under Saul it had no Capital, and no

united national life. But David, like Victor Emmanuel II., in Italy, welded its scattered fragments into one living whole, with Jerusalem, wrested from the Jebusites, as the centre of its life; and he raised the kingdom thus created to its highest state of prosperity and glory.

We cannot all be Davids. It is not given to many in the world to play all the public parts David did, and to play them so well. But we can, each in his own sphere, strive to avoid leading self-centred and self-seeking lives, and strive rather to have them characterised by fruitfulness, by works done not for our sake, but for the sake of others, as the tree produces fruit not for its own consumption, but for that of others. Let us fill our lives with deeds done for the sake of country, church, society, friends, family, neighbours, the poor, the suffering, for special classes, for those on whom the hand of bereavement or misfortune or punishment lies heavy, for those who have few to guide them and help them amid the troubles and perils of this present life—works done for the sake of God and humanity, "fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God," even though such works may be few—"two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or

five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof" —works all the better that they are produced amid difficulties, as we saw the berries are all the better, and the oil all the sweeter, when produced by trees rooted in the flinty rock.

(3) *The third characteristic of the olive tree is its usefulness.*—The olive tree is a useful tree. On one of the pediments of the Parthenon, the great and beautiful temple to the goddess Athena, that stood on the Acropolis, in Athens, there were sculptures which represented the following legend. Athena and Poseidon were contending about the sovereignty of Attica. The other deities intervened, and it was arranged that the one should get it who produced the most useful gift possible for the service of man. Poseidon, then, with his trident, struck the bare rock of the Acropolis, and caused a spring of brackish water to come up. Athena followed, and caused an olive tree to grow on the same flinty soil. The deities judged hers to be the more useful gift, and she obtained the coveted possession. Hence the names *Attica* and *Athens*. The legend shows the high estimation set by the ancients on the usefulness of the olive tree. There is no part of the tree which is not useful. For example—

(*a*) *The fruit, of which I have just spoken, is useful.*—Some trees have an abundance of fruit, but it is useless, or it may be hurtful or poisonous. But the olive tree is "a good tree, and bringeth forth good fruit." Its berries are wholesome, and are used largely for food, either in a natural or in a preserved state. In England olive berries are used only as a relish for food, but amongst Asiatic nations they are a necessary adjunct to the table. The pastoral meal of Horace consisted of "olive, endive, and mallow."

(*b*) *The oil extracted from the berries is useful.*—It is one of the most valuable oils in existence. It is the only oil spoken of in the Bible, and it is spoken of very frequently, and always as serving sacred and useful purposes. It was offered with the flour of oblation, "a tenth deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil" (Exod. xxix. 40). "And if thy oblation be a meat offering . . . it shall be of fine flour unleavened, mingled with oil. Thou shalt part it in pieces, and pour oil thereon: it is a meat offering" (Lev. ii. 5, 6). "And this is the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings. . . . If he offer it for a thanksgiving, then he shall offer . . . unleavened cakes mingled with oil, and unleavened

wafers anointed with oil, and cakes mingled with oil" (Lev. vii. 11, 12). From Exod. xxx. 24, we learn that it formed an element in the holy ointment used in the consecration of Aaron and of others to the priesthood, and to make holy the vessels of the sanctuary. It was used in the coronation of kings: "Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him (David) in the midst of the brethren" (1 Sam. xvi. 13). It was burned in the lamps of the Tabernacle and of the Temple. In Exodus xxvii. 20, we read, "And thou (Moses) shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always." In the vision of Zechariah and in that of St. John, we read of the two olive trees and the two candlesticks that stand before the God of the whole earth. Then, regarded from the edible and culinary point of view, olive oil possesses properties which no other vegetable oil possesses. And so in countries where the olive tree flourishes, as in Italy and Spain, it is extensively used for baking bread, for making soups, and in general cooking. It is not only a useful condiment, but is considered in the East essential to healthful life. Since Noah sent forth the dove out of the Ark, which returned to him with an olive

leaf plucked off, the olive has been the symbol not only of peace and goodwill, but also of national wealth and domestic plenty.

(*c*) *Its wood is useful.*—It is hard, and beautifully marked, and takes a brilliant polish. In the Temple of Solomon the great Cherubim of ten cubits, whose wings stretched from wall to wall in the Holy of Holies, and met over the Mercy Seat, were made of olive wood. At the present day it is worked into beautiful and durable articles of commerce.

(*d*) *Its roots are useful.*—In olive-growing countries coal is not usually found, but the roots of the olive take its place, and good clear burning fuel they make. The crushed stones of its berries are also used for burning.

(*e*) *Its leaves are useful.*—The leaves of the olive form a veil which so modifies the intense noonday heat of an Eastern or Southern sun, that grain and vegetables can be grown beneath and around the tree. This is not possible in the case of other trees. Their presence and shade usually delays vegetation around them. No one would think to sow grain in a forest of oaks and pine. But in olive-growing lands all the soil on the olive terraces is sown and planted, and the presence of the olive, with its evergreen leaves, not so thick as to exclude

light and air, but just close enough to "temper the deceitful ray," directly promotes growth.

(*f*) *Its bark is useful.*—From it is extracted a tonic medicine, useful in intermittent fever, and also a gum used as a perfume.

Thus, too, the life of David was a useful life. It was not only characterised by much fruit, but by much good fruit—fruit useful unto others. From what we have already seen of his life's work, this is apparent, although we do not hide from ourselves that politically he made mistakes, and morally he fell into grievous sins, which were hurtful unto others, and brought shame on the name and cause of Jehovah. Still the glory of his character and reign is the heritage of the Jews to-day, as his Psalter is that of the individual Christian and of the Church. In possessing it, we still sit under his shadow, and eat of his fruit.

In the same way, our works done for others ought to be for their benefit, not for their damage. All fruit is not good fruit. And so we may be very idly busy, or we may be very mischievously busy. But as a good tree produces good fruit, so we ought to produce good works, useful unto others. "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all

men." Let us, as St. Paul exhorts, "learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that we be not unfruitful." The leaves of our life-trees ought to be for "the healing of the nations." And let us also lay to heart the warning, "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire."

(4) *The fourth characteristic of the olive tree to be noted is its beauty.*—The olive tree is a beautiful tree. Like the trees in the Garden of Eden, or, as it ought to be rendered, the "Garden of Delight," it is "pleasant to the eyes, as well as good for food." And God, speaking by the prophet Hosea, says (xiv. 5, 6), "I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree." The leaf of the olive, first mentioned in Scripture as brought to Noah by the dove, by which he knew that even from the lower hills and sunny valleys the waters had abated, is beautiful. Mr. Ruskin says (*Proserpine*, 39), "There is nothing so constantly noble as the pure leaf of the laurel, bay, orange, and olive, numerable, sequent, perfect in setting, divinely simple and serene." And again (*Proserpine*, 162), "The olive leaf is, without any rival, the most beautiful of the

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leaves of timber trees;" and, speaking of its blossom, he says, "And its blossom, though minute, (is) of extreme beauty." And to look up from below into a grove of olive trees, with their strangely twisted gnarled trunks, is to look upon a scene of rare picturesqueness; whilst to look down upon their tops from above is to gaze upon a rich wide-spreading green velvet mantle. Nothing, too, is more beautiful, than the shimmer of the sunshine on their dancing leaves, whose colour changes with the changeful sky above.

And there was doubtless a rare beauty, physical, intellectual, and moral, about him who said, "I am like a green olive tree." We read that when a young man he was spoken of as "a comely person," and in the account of his anointing by Samuel, he is described as the youngest of seven sons, and as being "withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to." His personality must have been most striking and attractive, and, like that of many great men, fascinating and irresistible in its influence. He was a popular hero. Moral chivalry and beauty not only adorned many of his recorded deeds, but were inherent qualities of his mind and heart.

And no doubt beauty is an accompaniment

of godliness. Beauty—intellectual, moral, and spiritual—is often the product of goodness, and such even is physical beauty;

> "For of the soul, the body form doth take,
> For soul is form and doth the body make."

Prayer, the study of God's Word, communion with God, have physical effects. As a writer has said, "As the soul grows better or worse, it shows itself through its tabernacle of clay." "They see his face, and his name is in their foreheads." There is such a thing as the beauty of holiness, which makes the plainest face attractive. God's words regarding His children still hold true, their "beauty shall be as the olive tree." Still He gives them "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified."

(5) *Then there is the labour of the olive.*—All these valuable characteristics of the olive, its evergreenness, fruitfulness, usefulness, and beauty, do not come without thought and care and work. The tree requires to be tended and nourished and pruned, and the ground around it must be digged and enriched. I have seen, on the Riviera, trenches dug round the trees

into which materials, woollen rags especially, were thrown, that the tree might draw nourishment from them. The olive tree, too, has many enemies. What is called the olive fly attacks the fruit, caterpillars attack the leaves, a fungus growth may attack the tree itself. All this means constant care; hence Habakkuk speaks of the "labour of the olive."

And David laboured to maintain his heart right with God, his walk close with God. How earnestly he prays, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults," and "Search me, O God, and try me." In the Fifty-first Psalm, which immediately precedes the one from which my text is taken, how earnestly he longs for forgiveness and cleansing. How he loved the small portion of Scripture he possessed, and how he delighted in it! "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day."

In like manner, in the life of the Christian there must be labour in order to success. The Christian must co-operate with God. He must be a fellow-worker with God. He must wait upon God, he must watch unto prayer. He must be diligent in his study of the Scriptures. He must "strive to enter in at the strait gate." He must "work out his own salvation with fear and trembling," knowing

that it is God that worketh in him, "both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

(6) *Lastly, the olive tree, before it can be worth anything, must be grafted.*—It is not an olive tree in its natural state of which the Psalmist speaks. There is a wild olive tree, or oleaster, which is very different from the one we have been considering. It is small in stature, with thorny branches. It produces but few berries, and these contain a burning pungent essence, and yield little or no oil. Its wood cannot be worked into beautiful articles—its end is to be burned. An olive tree, then, to be good and useful, must be grafted. There are many kinds of olive trees—some thirty-five species have been distinguished—but this condition of goodness and usefulness holds true of them all. All must be grafted: that is to say, a good branch must be engrafted upon the wild stock, when the tree will become good. In harmony with this fact David, comparing himself to a green olive tree, adds the words, "in the house of God." All was explained by his nearness to God, by his living in fellowship with God. David's heart was touched, and changed. He is described as having been a man "after God's own heart," and that is the key to his character and life.